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THE MORALS OF SENECA.



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THE MORALS OF SENECA: A  
SELECTION OF HIS PROSE.  
EDITED BY WALTER CLODE.

LONDON: WALTER SCOTT, LTD.  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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**L**UCIUS ANNÆUS SENECA was the second of three sons born to Marcus Annæus Seneca, a native of Spain, rich, and of equestrian rank, by his wife Helvia, a Spanish lady. The date of his birth is assigned to the year B.C. 3, when Corduba, the modern Cordova, where he was born, and where his father then lived as a professor of rhetoric, was one of the principal towns of the Roman province of Bætica. While Lucius was still an infant he was sent to Rome and placed under the care of his mother's sister; subsequently his father followed with the rest of his family, and so prospered that at his death, about A.D. 37, he left his family in possession of ample means.

Lucius, though of a feeble constitution, early applied himself, under his father, to the study of rhetoric, and under Papirius Fabianus, Attalus, and Sotion the Stoic to philosophy. His own strong inclination was towards philosophy, which he embraced with great ardour, and practised the regimen of Stoicism with the greatest austerity, even to abandoning the use of animal food from a belief in the doctrine of transmigration of souls; but in deference to his father's wishes he renounced this mode of life, and turned to the bar, where he rapidly gained reputation as an advocate by his independence and brilliant eloquence, insomuch that Caligula the emperor, jealous of his own reputation as an orator, and displeased with the freedom with which he handled a cause before him, formed designs upon Seneca's life, but was persuaded to forego them on being assured by one of his mistresses

that disease would soon carry off so sickly a subject. However, the situation was such that Seneca was forced to retire from the bar, but he found solace in the renewal of his philosophic studies, to which he devoted himself afresh with his characteristic ardour and energy.

He had previously been elected quæstor, but in A.D. 41, the first year of the reign of the next emperor, Claudius, Seneca's career was again thwarted. It is difficult to follow the intricacies of the social and political machinations which led to this result, but the main facts appear to be as follows:—Messalina, the notorious wife of Claudius, a woman whose character even in a dissolute age was regarded as infamous, jealous of the influence which the emperor's niece Julia, whom he had but recently recalled from banishment, exercised over him, persuaded Claudius to banish her a second time. Seneca was a friend of Julia; whether the friendship had degenerated into an intrigue, or whether Seneca had made himself too zealous on Julia's behalf, it is certain that the graver charge was preferred against him by Messalina. She succeeded in obtaining a decree of banishment against him also, and he remained eight years an exile in the island of Corsica. Two works can be traced to this period, both entitled "*On Consolation*," one addressed to his mother Helvia; the other to Polybius, the reigning palace favourite, containing a good deal of unworthy adulation of Claudius, composed, no doubt, for the royal ear, in the hope of obtaining a reversal of his sentence. These two works have, besides, a certain biographical interest, since we learn from them that Seneca, who was married, though to whom is unknown, at the date of his treatise "*On Anger*," was now a widower with a family of one son, Marcus, and one daughter, Novatilla, having lost a second son a few days before setting out for Corsica.

In A.D. 49 Messalina was executed for her treasonable marriage with Caius Silius, and the emperor married Julia's sister, Agrippina, by whose influence Seneca was recalled. He became prætor, and afterwards consul, besides occupying the post of confidential adviser to the empress, whose son Lucius

Domitius, afterwards the emperor Nero of infamous celebrity, became his pupil. In A.D. 54 Claudius was poisoned by Agrippina, and Nero, who was then about eighteen years old, succeeded him as emperor. From tutor, Seneca became minister, sharing the duty of advising the emperor with Burrus, who commanded the household troops. In this position they succeeded for five years in conducting the government with a moderation which afterwards became proverbial, although for the first year greatly hampered by Agrippina's unconstitutional claim to participate in it ; indeed, so jealous was she of her ascendancy over her son being shared with others that, upon discovering Nero's amour with his freedwoman Acte, at which his advisers are said to have connived, she threatened to depose him in favour of the late emperor's own son Britannicus. The death of Britannicus, however, which took place at this time, and which, if due to Nero, may be regarded as the outcome of this threat, paved the way to a reconciliation, which lasted during the next four years. But the position of the emperor's advisers was, at best, exceedingly ambiguous ; and the great wealth which Seneca amassed about this time, partly, as it was hinted, from the estates of the emperor's victims, laid him especially open to suspicions. The part, however, which he finally played in the struggle which was shortly renewed between Agrippina and Nero, is, perhaps, his greatest condemnation. His allegiance up to this time had been divided between his master and his patroness ; but when the crisis came, he had to choose finally which to support. A criminal passion which the emperor entertained for a woman called Poppæa brought the matter to a head. Poppæa wished to be empress ; and as this was impossible so long as Agrippina remained alive, sought that the emperor should get rid of his mother, persuading him that Agrippina was conspiring against him. After unsuccessfully attempting to drown his mother, Nero summoned his advisers, neither of whom would initiate any scheme of his own, while both concurred in allowing the deed to be done by an assassin ; and Seneca is credited with the



authorship of a letter to the Senate, in which the emperor at once denied and justified the crime.

This may be regarded as the turning-point in Seneca's career; henceforward his power declined, and when, three years later, A.D. 63, Burrus died by poison, in consequence of his opposition to the emperor's scheme for divorcing his wife Octavia, and two of Nero's creatures succeeded him, that power was gone. The emperor still, however, professed to regard him with favour, and refused to allow him to retire or to surrender any portion of his wealth, which he had offered to do when it became the subject of accusation against him. Seneca then withdrew himself as much as possible from public affairs, kept his chamber, saw but few friends, and devoted himself to philosophy. He had now nothing to look forward to but a dishonoured old age and ignominious death. It is to this period that a great many of his extant works, including the letters to Lucilius, are attributed. Nero's next act was to plunder the temples to provide funds for rebuilding Rome, the greater part of which had just perished by fire. Seneca made this act of sacrilege a reason for tendering his resignation a second time; and when it was refused, retired to the country and awaited his doom. It was not long in coming. It was reported that he was privy to a conspiracy against the emperor, of which Piso was the head. Nero availed himself of this pretext for despatching him. After going through the formality of demanding an explanation, the emperor sent a messenger to take his life. At a villa a few miles from Rome, where he had halted on his return from his country house, Seneca heard with tranquillity his doom, and only requested a short respite to put his affairs in order. This indulgence was denied him, and after taking leave of his friends, the veins of his arm were opened that he might bleed to death; the same blow, at her request, opened those of Paulina, his second wife, whom he had married shortly after his return from exile, who declared that she would share his fate, and was only saved against her wishes when insensibility had overtaken her husband. Seneca's body being attenuated by age and the observance of a

meagre diet, and the blood refusing to flow, the veins of his legs were also opened to accelerate his end. He lingered, however for some hours in excessive torture, dictating his last words and counsels to his friends, which were taken down and published, but are not now extant. Death still refusing to come, he drank hemlock, and upon this also proving ineffectual, he entered a warm bath, some of the water of which he sprinkled upon those around him, saying that it was a libation to Jupiter the Liberator. He was then taken into a vapour stove, where he was quickly suffocated. The date of his death is A.D. 65. .

Such is the brief outline of Seneca's career ; in the following pages an attempt has been made to collect the sum of his teaching. He would show how men should act in order to secure happiness in this life ; without denying the possibility of a future state, he considered this the practical question for the moralist. There is nothing speculative in his philosophy ; with him the happy man is not the man who knows, but the man who acts. His method of securing happiness is in the subjection of the body to the mind, the flesh to the spirit ; the soul is an effluence of the divine spirit, an indwelling deity ; the body but a part of the brute creation. The moral life is a struggle between the two principles—the godlike and the godless. But while he proposed happiness as the aim of life, he was careful to warn people against confounding it with mere enjoyment. Life, he said, was a camp, and living soldiers' work, and there was need of endurance. Similarly he pointed out that the individual's happiness was bound up in the happiness of others ; he recognised the tie of human fellowship in all possible relationships. Men must live for their friends, their fathers, their wives, their country ; for them they must forego delights and live laborious days. In like manner a master should treat his slaves with kindness and live on familiar terms with them, for slaves are men, humble friends, fellow-servants, fellow-soldiers. His writings are, in the main, arguments in support of these central ideas, rules by which they may be carried into practice, or examples showing the application of them to the affairs of everyday life. There is scarcely any part of a man's moral and

social duty which he left untouched ; while the resemblance of his teaching to that of the New Testament led the early fathers to claim him a Christian, and to the production of the apocryphal correspondence between him and St. Paul.

The high moral tone adopted by Seneca throughout his writings, and the more than questionable character of many of his acts, have provoked comparisons. The discrepancy is apparent, but the ability to conceive and expound ethical truths is not necessarily coupled with a corresponding power of realising them in practice. Setting aside the question whether his writings should not be considered rather as a sum of his experience than the rules of his life, a fairer comparison would probably be between what he did and what he had strength to do. It should also be borne in mind that Dion, his principal biographer, was confessedly prejudiced against him. No doubt he was wealthy at a time when he professed the greatest admiration for poverty ; still his wealth was honestly acquired, and his readiness to surrender it to Nero may be taken as a proof of the sincerity of his professions. The relationship existing between Seneca and Julia was ambiguous, but as Messalina was the accuser, his innocence is as probable as his guilt. Even if Britannicus was murdered by Nero, which is doubtful, it cannot be shown that Seneca was an accomplice. Perhaps Seneca's greatest misfortune was to have known Nero. Probably no firmness on his part, even had his ambiguous position allowed him to exercise it, would have made Nero other than he was. The best years of Nero's reign undoubtedly coincide with the period of Seneca's ascendancy. The murder of Agrippina was, no doubt, a questionable act, but considering her political influence, it may be regarded more as a *coup d'état* than as the capricious and heartless act of a tyrant. Disappointed in the hope that her son would be a tool in the hands of herself and her advisers, she was prepared to try conclusions with him ; civil war and a divided rule were probably the alternatives to her death. It is easier to condemn his action than to suggest what he ought to have done under the circumstances. Passing to his

private character, the gentleness of his disposition, which can be traced in his writings, was united to many amiable and even fine qualities; his graceful courtesy, his affectionateness, and his loyalty to his friends being indisputable. His own writings are full of kindly notices of his brother Gallio, of filial praises of his mother Helvia, and these, with his beautiful affection for his wife Paulina, which found a glorious response in her enthusiastic devotion and loving remembrance of him, are an honourable testimony to the goodness that was in him. It may be said of Seneca that he not only opposed himself to the vices of the multitude, but even to what they may have regarded as their legitimate pleasures. Gladiatorial exhibitions, for instance, he consistently and strenuously denounced, and nothing can detract from the courage with which he met his death; although it is usual to attempt to minimise it by pointing to the frequency of such acts of stoicism at that period, this does not detract from Seneca's individual courage. If his death was not heroic, it was at least manly; if not sublime, it was surely touching and beautiful. If, then, in spite of flaws in character and failures in practice, we look at the tone of his morality, his lessons of mercy and forgiveness, his doctrine of forbearance and indulgence to human frailty, his ideal of married life, his estimate of true friendship, his spirit of universal love, we may regard Seneca, not only as one of the best, one of the wisest, and one of the purest of Roman citizens in an age notorious for corruption, but in his teaching as an illustration of the approach of the wisdom of the Greek and Roman world to what has since been considered the truer wisdom of the East.

The following is a list of Seneca's extant prose works with their approximate dates:—*Consolatio ad Marciam*, before A.D. 41; *Consolatio ad Helviam* A.D. 43; *Consolatio ad Polybium*, A.D. 44; *De Tranquillitate Animi*, *De Ira*, *De Brevitate Vitæ* A.D. 49-54; *Ludus de Morte Claudii Cæsaris*, A.D. 54; *De Clementia*, *De Constantia Sapientis*, *De Vita Beata*, *De Beneficiis*, A.D. 54-62; *De Providentia*, *De Otio Sapientis*, and the seven books of *Natural Questions*, A.D. 62; *Letters to Lucilius*, A.D. 62.

## INTRODUCTION.

Lastly, as to the sources of the present volume. Sir Roger L'Estrange having fallen, to use his own words, "upon an age desperately overrun with drolls and sceptics," conceived the idea of promoting a healthier tone by publishing an edition of Seneca's moral works. He determined not to translate his author verbatim, "but to digest and commonplace his morals in such sort that any man upon occasion may know where to find them." Such was the origin and scope of his work entitled *Seneca's Morals by way of Abstract*, first published in 1678. The first hundred and fifty-eight pages of the present work, entitled, "Of a Happy Life," are taken, with some slight alterations, from L'Estrange. Here Seneca's teaching will be found distributed under convenient heads. The reader will view this portion only as a mosaic made up of pieces extracted from a quarry which is the whole of Seneca's writings.

The remainder of the volume is composed of extracts from a translation of Seneca's works made by Thomas Lodge, the dramatist, published at London by William Staneby in 1614. Though called a translation, Lodge's work approaches nearer to being a paraphrase; still, in collating each extract with the Latin text, alterations have been sparingly introduced, in order to preserve, as far as possible, the continuity of style, and also under the impression that Lodge's prose will have an interest of its own.

WALTER CLODE.

LONDON, *Easter Tuesday*, 1888.

OF A HAPPY LIFE.



# SENECA

## OF A HAPPY LIFE.

### CHAPTER I.

*Of a Happy Life, and wherein it consists.*



HERE is nothing in this world, perhaps, that is talked more of, and less understood, than the business of a *happy life*. It is every man's wish and design, and yet not one in a thousand knows wherein that happiness consists. We live, however, in a blind and eager pursuit of it ; and the more haste we make in a wrong way, the farther we are from our journey's end. Let us, therefore, first consider what it is we would be at ; and secondly, which is the readiest way to compass it. If we are right, we shall find every day how much we improve ; but if we either follow the cry, or the track of people that are out of the way, we must expect to be misled, and to continue



our days in wandering and error. Wherefore, it highly concerns us to take along with us a skilful guide: for it is not in this, as in other voyages, where the highway brings us to our destination; or, if a man should happen to be out, where the inhabitants might set him right again: but, on the contrary, the beaten road is here the most dangerous, and the people, instead of helping us, misguide us. Let us not, therefore, follow like sheep, but rather govern ourselves by reason than by other men's fashions. It fares with us in human life as in a routed army—one stumbles first, and then another falls upon him; and so they follow, one upon the neck of another, until the whole field comes to be but one heap of miscarriages. And the mischief is, that we perish by other men's examples. But we shall be healed if only we separate ourselves from the vulgar. For the question of a happy life is not to be decided by vote. Human affairs are not disposed so happily that the best things please the most men. It is an argument that the cause is bad when the common sort applaud. The common sort find it easier to believe than to judge, and content themselves with what is usual, never examining whether it be good or no. By the common sort is intended the man of title as well as the clouted shoe; for I do not distinguish them by the eye, but I have a better and truer light: let the soul find out the good of the soul. Worldly felicity, I know, makes the head giddy; but if ever a man comes to himself again, he will confess that whatsoever he has done he wishes undone, and that the

## SENECA.

things he feared were better than those he prayed for.

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### TRUE HAPPINESS.

True happiness is to be free from perturbations ; to understand our duties toward God and man ; to enjoy the present, without any anxious dependence upon the future ; not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient ; for he that is so wants nothing. The great blessings of mankind are within us, and within our reach ; but we shut our eyes, and, like people in the dark, we fall foul of the very thing we search for without finding it. Tranquillity is a certain equality of mind which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress. Nothing can make it less, for it is the state of human perfection : it raises us as high as we can go, and makes every man his own supporter, whereas he that is borne up by anything else may fall. He that judges aright, and perseveres in it, enjoys a perpetual calm ; he takes a true prospect of things ; he observes an order and measure in all his actions ; he has a benevolence in his nature ; he squares his life according to reason, and draws to himself love and admiration. Without a certain and unchangeable judgment, all the rest is but fluctuation. Liberty and serenity of mind must necessarily ensue upon the mastering of those things, which either allure or affright us, when, instead of those flashy pleasures (which even at the best are both vain and hurtful together), we shall find

ourselves possessed of an excellent joy assured and a continual peace and repose of soul. There must be a sound mind to make a happy man ; there must be a constancy in all conditions, a care for the things of this world, but without trouble, and such an indifference to the bounties of fortune, that either with them or without them we may live content. There must be neither lamentation, nor quarrelling, nor sloth, nor fear, for it makes a discord in a man's life. He that fears serves. The joy of a wise man stands firm without interruption ; in all places, at all times, and in all conditions, his thoughts are cheerful and quiet. Into what dangerous and miserable servitude he falls who suffers pleasures and sorrows (two unfaithful and cruel commanders) to possess him successively ! I do not speak this either as a bar to the fair enjoyment of lawful pleasures, or to the gentle flatteries of reasonable expectations. On the contrary, I would have men to be always in good humour, provided that it arises from their own souls, and is cherished in their own breasts. Other delights are trivial ; they may smooth the brow, but they do not fill and affect the heart. True joy is a serene and sober motion, and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing. The seat of it is within, and there is no cheerfulness like the resolution of a brave mind, that has fortune under its feet. He that can look death in the face, and bid it welcome ; open his door to poverty, and bridle his appetites ; this is the man whom Providence has established in the possession of inviolable delights. The pleasures of the vulgar are

ungrounded, thin, and superficial ; but the others are solid and eternal. As the body itself is rather a necessary thing than a great, so the comforts of it are but temporary and vain ; whereas a peaceful conscience, honest thoughts, virtuous actions, and an indifference for casual events, are blessings without end, satiety, or measure.

## CHAPTER II.

*Human Happiness is founded upon Wisdom  
and Virtue.*



TAKing for granted that human happiness is founded upon wisdom and virtue, we shall treat of these two points in order. And first, of *Wisdom*, in its relation to a good life and the happiness of mankind.

### WISDOM, WHAT IT IS.

Wisdom is a right understanding, a faculty of discerning good from evil, what is to be chosen and what rejected ; a judgment grounded upon the value of things, and not the common opinion of them. It sets a watch over our words and deeds, and makes us invincible by either good or evil fortune. It has for its object things past and things to come, things transitory and things eternal. It examines all the circumstances of time, and the nature and operation of the mind. It stands to philosophy as avarice to money—the one desires and the other is desired ; the one is the effect and the reward of the other. To be wise is the use of wisdom, as seeing is the use of eyes, and speaking of the tongue. He that is perfectly

wise is perfectly happy ; nay, the very beginning of wisdom makes life easy to us. It is not enough to know this ; we must print it in our minds by daily meditation, and so bring a good will to a good habit. We must practise what we preach, for philosophy is not a subject for popular ostentation, nor does it rest in words, but in deeds. It is not an entertainment to be taken up for delight, or to give a taste to our leisure, but it should fashion the mind, govern our actions, and tell us what we are to do and what avoid. It sits at the helm and guides us through all hazards ; nay, we cannot be safe without it, for every hour gives us occasion to use it. It informs us in all the duties of life : piety to our parents, faith to our friends, charity to the poor, judgment in counsel ; it gives us peace by fearing nothing, and riches by coveting nothing.

A WISE MAN DOES HIS DUTY IN ALL CONDITIONS.

There is no condition of life that excludes a wise man from discharging his duty. If his fortune be good, he tempers it ; if bad, he masters it ; if he has an estate, he will exercise his virtue in plenty ; if none, in poverty ; if he cannot do it in his country, he will do it in banishment ; if he has no command, he will do the office of common soldier. Some people have the skill of reclaiming the fiercest beasts : they will make a lion embrace his keeper. This is the case of a wise man in the extremest difficulties ; let them be never so terrible in themselves, when they come to

## *SENECA.*

him once, they are perfectly tame. Wisdom does not teach our fingers but our minds, and instructs us not in the instruments but in the government of life, that we may not only live, but live happily. She teaches us what things are good and what evil, and what only appear so; to distinguish between true greatness and false; to raise our thoughts to heaven; to exalt ourselves from things corporeal to incorporeal; to search nature and give laws to life; and that it is not enough to know God unless we obey him. She looks upon all accidents as acts of providence; sets a true value upon things; delivers us from false opinions, and condemns all pleasures that are attended with repentance. She allows nothing to be good that will not be so for ever; no man to be happy, but he that needs no other happiness than what he has within himself; no man to be great or powerful that is not master of himself. This is the felicity of human life, a felicity that can neither be corrupted nor extinguished.

### RIGHT REASON IS THE PERFECTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

A wise man, in what condition soever he is, will always be happy, for he subjects all things to himself, submits himself to reason, and governs his actions by counsel, not by passion. He is not moved with the utmost violences of fortune, nor with the extremities of fire and sword; whereas a fool is afraid of his own shadow, and surprised at ill accidents, as if they were all levelled at him. He does nothing unwillingly, for whatever he

finds necessary, he makes it his choice. He propounds to himself the certain scope and end of human life : he follows that which conduces to it, and avoids that which hinders it. He is content with his lot, whatever it be, without wishing for what he has not, though of the two, he had rather abound than want. The business of his life, like that of nature, is performed without tumult or noise : he neither fears danger nor provokes it ; but from caution, not from cowardice ; for captivity, wounds, and chains he looks upon as unreal terrors. He undertakes to do well that which he does. Arts are but the servants whom wisdom commands. He is cautious in doubtful cases, temperate in prosperity, and resolute in adversity ; still making the best of every condition, and improving all occasions to make them serviceable to his fate. Some accidents there are which, I confess, may affect him, but they cannot overthrow him ; such as bodily pains, loss of children and friends, or the ruin and desolation of his country. One must be made of stone or iron not to be sensible of these calamities ; and besides, it were no virtue to bear them if one did not feel them.

#### THREE DEGREES OF PROFICIENTS IN WISDOM.

There are three degrees of proficient in the school of wisdom. The first are those that come within the sight of it, but not up to it : they have learned what they ought to do, but they have not put their knowledge into practice ; they are past the hazard of a



relapse, but they are still in the clutches of disease ; by which I mean an ill habit, that makes them over-eager upon things which are either not much to be desired, or not at all. A second sort are those that have conquered their appetite for a season, but are yet in fear of falling back. A third sort are those that are clear of many vices, but not of all. They are not covetous, but perhaps they are passionate ; firm enough in some cases, but weak in others ; perhaps despise death, and yet shrink at pain. There are diversities in wise men, but no inequalities ;—one is more affable, another more ready, a third, a better speaker ; but the felicity of them all is equal.

## CHAPTER III.

*There can be no Happiness without Virtue.*



IRTUE is that perfect good which is the complement of a happy life; the only immortal thing that belongs to mortality. It is the knowledge both of others and of itself; it is an invincible greatness of mind, not to be elevated or dejected with good or ill fortune. It is sociable and gentle, free, steady, and fearless; content within itself, full of inexhaustible delights, and it is valued for itself. One may be a good physician, a good governor, a good grammarian, but without virtue one cannot be a good man. It is not the matter but the virtue that makes the action good or ill; and he that is led in triumph may be yet greater than his conqueror. When we come once to value our flesh above our honesty we are lost. And with regard to the loss of friends and things temporal, may we not say, if virtue remains, What matters it whether the water be stopt or no, so long as the fountain is safe? Is a man ever the wiser for a multitude of friends, or the more foolish for the loss of them? So neither is he the happier nor the more miserable. Short life, grief, and pain are accessions that have no effect at all upon virtue. It consists in the action,

and not in the things we do ; in the choice itself, and not in the subject matter of it. It is not a despicable body or condition—not poverty, infamy, or scandal; that can obscure the glories of virtue ; but a man may see her through all oppositions, and he that looks diligently into the state of a wicked man will see the canker at his heart through all the false and dazzling splendours of greatness and fortune.

#### THE DIGNITY OF VIRTUE.

If one could but see the mind of a good man, as it is illustrated with virtue, the beauty and the majesty of it, which is a dignity not so much as to be thought of without love and veneration, would not a man bless himself at the sight of such an object, as at the encounter of some supernatural power ?—a power so miraculous that it is a kind of charm upon the souls of those that are truly affected with it. There is so wonderful a grace and authority in it, that even the worst of men approve it, and set up for the reputation of being accounted virtuous themselves. They covet the fruit indeed, and the profit of wickedness, but they hate and are ashamed of the imputation of it ; they know it, and they have a respect for it, though they do not practise it ; they cover their most notorious iniquities with a pretext of justice. He that robs upon the highway had rather find his booty than force it. Ask any of them that live upon rapine, fraud, oppression, if they had not rather enjoy a fortune honestly gotten, and their

consciences will not suffer them to deny it. Nay, so powerful is virtue, and so gracious is providence, that every man has a light set up within him for a guide, which we do all of us both see and acknowledge, though we do not pursue it. It is virtue that makes the prisoner upon the torture happier than the executioner, and sickness better than health, if we bear it without yielding or repining. It is virtue that overcomes ill-fortune, and moderates good; for it marches betwixt the one and the other, with an equal contempt of both. It turns (like fire) all things into itself; our actions and our friendships are tinged with it, and whatever it touches becomes amiable. That which is frail and mortal rises and falls, grows, wastes, and varies from itself; but the state of things divine is always the same; and so is virtue, let the matter be what it will. It is never the worse for the difficulty of the action, nor the better for the easiness of it. It is the same in a rich man as in a poor, in a sickly man as in a sound, in a strong as in a weak. The virtue of the besieged is as great as that of the besiegers.

#### THE GOOD WILL IS ACCEPTED FOR THE DEED.

If a man does not live up to his own rules, it is something yet to have virtuous meditations and good purposes, even without acting. It is generous, the very adventure of being good, and the bare proposal of an eminent course of life, though beyond the force of human frailty to accomplish. There is

something of honour yet in the miscarriage ; nay, in the naked contemplation of it. I would receive my own death with as little trouble as I would hear of another man's. I would bear the same mind, whether I be rich or poor, whether I get or lose in the world. What I have I will not either sordidly spare or prodigally squander away ; and I will reckon upon benefits well placed as the fairest part of my possession, not valuing them by number or weight, but by the profit and esteem of the receiver, accounting myself never the poorer for that which I give to a worthy person. What I do shall be done for conscience, not ostentation. I will eat and drink, not to gratify my palate, or only to fill and empty, but to satisfy nature. I will be cheerful to my friends, mild and placable to my enemies. I will prevent an honest request, if I can foresee it, and I will grant it without asking. I will look upon the whole world as my country, and upon the gods both as the witnesses and the judges of my words and deeds. I will live and die with this testimony—that I loved good studies and a good conscience ; that I never invaded another man's liberty, and that I preserved my own. I will govern my life and my thoughts as if the whole world were to see the one and to read the other ; for what does it signify to make anything a secret to my neighbour, when to God (who is the searcher of our hearts) all our privacies are open ?

## VIRTUE IS DIVIDED INTO CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION.

Virtue is divided into two parts—contemplation and action. The one is delivered by institution, the other by admonition. One part of virtue consists in discipline, the other in exercise, for we must first learn, and then practise. The sooner we begin to apply ourselves to it, and the more haste we make, the longer shall we enjoy the comforts of a rectified mind ; nay, we have the fruition of it in the very act of forming it. If it was so great a comfort to us to pass from the subjection of our childhood into a state of liberty and business, how much greater will it be when we come to cast off the boyish levity of our minds and range ourselves among the philosophers ? We are past our minority, it is true, but not our indiscretions, and, what is yet worse, we have the authority of seniors and the weakness of children. Whoever studies this point well will find that many things are the less to be feared the more terrible they appear. To think anything good that is not honest were to reproach Providence, for good men suffer many inconveniences ; but virtue, like the sun, goes on still with her work, let the air be never so cloudy, and finishes her course, extinguishing likewise all other splendours and oppositions, insomuch that calamity is no more to a virtuous mind than a shower into the sea. That which is right is not to be valued by quantity, number, or time ; a life of a day may be as honest as a life of an hundred years ; but yet virtue in one man may have a larger field to shew itself in than in another.

One man, perhaps, may be in a station to administer unto cities and kingdoms, to contrive good laws, create friendships, and do beneficial offices to mankind ; it is another man's fortune to be pinched by poverty, or put out of the way by banishment ; and yet the latter may be as virtuous as the former, and may have as great a mind, as exact a prudence, as inviolable a justice, and as large a knowledge of things, both divine and human, without which a man cannot be happy. For virtue is open to all ; as well to servants and exiles as to princes. It is profitable to the world and to itself, at all distances and in all conditions, and there is no difficulty can excuse a man from the exercise of it ; and it is only to be found in a wise man, though there may be some faint resemblances of it in the common people. Nor does virtue dwell upon the tip of the tongue, but in the temple of a purified heart. He that depends upon any other good becomes covetous of life and what belongs to it, which exposes a man to appetites that are vast, unlimited, and intolerable.

A VIRTUOUS LIFE MUST BE ALL OF A PIECE.

Neither are we to value ourselves upon a day or an hour, or any one action, but upon the whole habit of the mind. Some men do one thing bravely, but not another ; they will shrink at infamy and bear up against poverty. In this case we commend the fact and despise the man. The soul is never in the right place, until it be delivered from the cares of human

affairs. We must labour and climb the hill if we will arrive at virtue, whose seat is upon the top of it. He that masters avarice, and is truly good, stands firm against ambition; he looks upon his last hour, not as a punishment, but as the equity of a common fate. He that subdues his carnal lusts shall easily keep himself untainted with any other, so that reason does not encounter this or that vice by itself, but beats down all at a blow. What does he care for ignominy, that only values himself upon conscience and not opinion? Socrates looked a scandalous death in the face with the same constancy that he had before practised towards the thirty tyrants; his virtue consecrated the very dungeon. He that is wise will take delight even in an ill opinion that is well gotten. It is ostentation, not virtue, when a man will have his good deeds published; and it is not enough to be just where there is honour to be gotten, but to continue so, in defiance of infamy and danger.

## VIRTUE CAN NEVER BE SUPPRESSED.

But virtue cannot lie hid, for the time will come that shall raise it again, even after it is buried, and deliver it from the malignity of the age that oppressed it. Immortal glory is the shadow of it, and keeps it company whether we will or no; but sometimes the shadow goes before the substance, and other whiles it follows it, and the later it comes the larger it is, when even envy itself shall have given way to it. It was a long time that Democritus was taken



for a madman, and before Socrates had any esteem in the world. How long was it before Cato could be understood? Nay, he was affronted, contemned, and rejected; and people never knew the value of him until they had lost him. I speak of those that fortune has made famous for their persecutions; and there are others also that the world never took notice of until they were dead. Now, as the body is to be kept in upon the down-hill and forced upwards, so there are some virtues that require the rein, and others the spur. In liberality, temperance, gentleness of nature, we are to check ourselves, for fear of falling; but in patience, resolution, and perseverance, where we are to mount the hill, we stand in need of encouragement. Upon this division of the matter I had rather steer the smoother course than pass through the experiments of sweat and blood. I know it is my duty to be content in all conditions, but yet if it were at my election, I would choose the fairest. When a man comes once to stand in need of fortune, his life is anxious, suspicious, timorous, dependent upon every moment, and in fear of all accidents. How can that man resign himself to God, or bear his lot, whatever it be, without murmuring, and cheerfully submit to providence, that shrinks at every motion of pleasure or pain? It is virtue alone that raises us above griefs, hopes, fears, and chances, and makes us not only patient, but willing, as knowing that whatever we suffer is according to the decree of heaven. He that is overcome with pleasure (so contemptible and weak an enemy), what will become of him when

he comes to grapple with dangers, necessities, torments, death, and the dissolution of nature itself? Wealth, honour, and favour may come upon a man by chance; nay, they may be cast upon him without so much as looking after them; but virtue is the work of industry and labour, and certainly it is worth the while to purchase that good which brings all others along with it. A good man is happy within himself, and independent of fortune, kind to his friend, temperate to his enemy, religiously just, indefatigably laborious, and he discharges all duties with a constancy and congruity of actions.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *Philosophy is the Guide of Life.*



FROM this general prospect of wisdom and virtue, which are the foundations of our tranquillity, we will pass to a particular consideration of the means by which it may be procured, and of the impediments that obstruct it, beginning with that philosophy which principally regards our manners, and instructs us in the measures of a virtuous and quiet life.

#### PHILOSOPHY IS MORAL, NATURAL, AND RATIONAL.

Philosophy is divided into moral, natural, and rational. The first concerns our manners, the second searches the works of nature, and the third furnishes us with propriety of words and arguments, and the faculty of distinguishing, that we may not be imposed upon with tricks and fallacies. The causes of things fall under natural philosophy, arguments under rational, and actions under moral. Moral philosophy is again divided into matters of justice which arise from the estimation of things, and of men, and into affections and actions, and a failing in any one of these disorders all the rest. Socrates places all philosophy

in morals, and wisdom in the distinguishing of good and evil. It is the art and law of life, and it teaches us what to do in all cases, and, like good marksmen, to hit the white at any distance. The force of it is incredible, for it gives us, in the weakness of a man, the security of a spirit; in sickness it is as good as a remedy to us, for whatsoever eases the mind is profitable also to the body. The physician may prescribe diet and exercise, and accommodate his rule and medicine to the disease, but it is philosophy that must bring us to a contempt of death, which is the remedy of all diseases. In poverty it gives us riches, or such a state of mind as makes them superfluous to us. It arms us against all difficulties. One man is pressed with death, another with poverty, some with envy; others are offended at providence, and unsatisfied with the condition of mankind. But philosophy prompts us to relieve the prisoner, the infirm, the necessitous, the condemned, to show the ignorant their errors and rectify their affections. It makes us inspect and govern our manners; it rouses us where we are faint and drowsy; it binds up what is loose, and humbles in us that which is contumacious; it delivers the mind from the bondage of the body, and raises it up to the contemplation of its divine original.

#### ONE WISE MAN TEACHES ANOTHER.

Neither is philosophy only profitable to the public, but one wise man helps another, even in the exercise of their virtues; and the one has need of the other,

both for conversation and counsel, for they kindle a mutual emulation in good offices. We are not so perfect yet but that many new things still remain to be found out, which will give us the reciprocal advantages of instructing one another; for as one wicked man is contagious to another, and the more vices are mingled, the worse it is, so is it on the contrary with good men and their virtues. As men of letters are the most useful and excellent of friends, so are they the best of subjects, as being better judges of the blessings they enjoy under a well-ordered government, and of what they owe to the magistrate for their freedom and protection. They are men of sobriety and learning, and free from boasting and insolence; they reprove the vice without reproaching the person, for they have learned to be wise without either pomp or envy. That which we see in high mountains we find in philosophers: they seem taller near hand than at a distance. They are raised above other men, but their greatness is substantial. Nor do they stand upon tiptoe that they may seem higher than they are, but, content with their own stature, they reckon themselves tall enough when fortune cannot reach them. Their laws are short, and yet comprehensive too, for they bind all.

#### PHILOSOPHY TEACHES US TO LIVE WELL.

It is of the bounty of nature that we live, but of philosophy that we live well, which is, in truth, a greater benefit than life itself. Not but that

philosophy is also the gift of heaven, so far as to the faculty, but not to the science, for that must be the business of industry. No man is born wise, but wisdom and virtue require a tutor, though we can easily learn to be vicious without a master. It is philosophy that gives us a veneration for God, a charity for our neighbour ; that teaches us our duty to heaven, and exhorts us to an agreement one with another. It unmasks things that are terrible to us, assuages our lusts, refutes our errors, restrains our luxury, reproves our avarice, and works strangely upon tender natures.

THE LIBERAL SCIENCES ARE MATTERS RATHER OF  
CURIOSITY THAN VIRTUE.

To tell you my opinion now of the liberal sciences, I have no great esteem for anything that terminates in profit or money ; and yet I shall allow them to be so far beneficial, as they only prepare the understanding, without detaining it. They are but the rudiments of wisdom, and only then to be learned when the mind is capable of nothing better, and the knowledge of them is better worth the keeping than the acquiring. They do not so much as pretend to the making of us virtuous, but only to give us an aptitude of disposition to be so. The grammarian's business lies in a syntax of speech ; or if he proceed to history, or the measuring of a verse, he is at the end of his line. But what signifies a congruity of periods, the computing

of syllables, or the modifying of numbers, to the taming of our passions, or the repressing of our lusts? The philosopher proves the body of the sun to be large, but for the true dimensions of it we must ask the mathematician. Geometry and music, if they do not teach us to master our hopes and fears, all the rest is to little purpose. What does it concern us which was the elder of the two, Homer or Hesiod, or which was the taller, Hellen or Hecuba? We take a great deal of pains to trace Ulysses in his wanderings, but were it not time as well spent to look to ourselves, that we may not wander at all? Are not we ourselves tossed with tempestuous passions, and both assaulted by terrible monsters on the one hand, and tempted by sirens on the other? Teach me my duty to my country, to my father, to my wife, to mankind. What is it to me whether Penelope was honest or no? Teach me to know how to be so myself, and to live according to that knowledge. What am I the better for putting so many parts together in music, and raising an harmony out of so many different tones? Teach me to tune my affections, and to hold constant to myself. Geometry teaches me the art of measuring acres; teach me to measure my appetites, and to know when I have enough; teach me to divide with my brother, and to rejoice in the prosperity of my neighbour. You teach me how I may hold my own, and keep my estate; but I would rather learn how I may lose it all, and yet be contented. It is hard, you will say, for a man to be forced from the fortune of his family. This estate, it is true, was my father's,

but whose was it in the time of my great-grandfather? I do not only say, What man's was it? but What nation's? The astrologer tells me of Saturn and Mars in opposition; but I say, let them be as they will, their courses and their positions are ordered them by an unchangeable decree of fate. Either they produce and point out the effects of all things, or else they signify them. If the former, what are we the better for the knowledge of that which must of necessity come to pass? If the latter, what does it avail us to foresee what we cannot avoid? So that whether we know or not know, the event will still be the same.

IT IS NOT FOR THE DIGNITY OF A PHILOSOPHER TO  
BE CURIOUS ABOUT WORDS.

He that designs the institution of human life should not be over curious of his words; it does not stand with his dignity to be solicitous about sounds and syllables, and to debase the mind of man with small and trivial things, placing wisdom in matters that are rather difficult than great. If he be eloquent, it is his good fortune, not his business. Subtile disputations are only the sports of wits that play upon the catch, and are fitter to be contemned than resolved. Were not I a madman to sit wrangling about words, and putting of nice and impertinent questions, when the enemy has already made the breach, the town fired over my head, and the mine ready to play that shall blow me up into the air? Were this a time for



fooleries? Let me rather fortify myself against death and inevitable necessities; let me understand that the good of life does not consist in the length or space, but in the use of it. When I go to sleep, who knows whether I shall wake again? and when I wake, whether ever I shall sleep again?—when I go abroad, whether ever I shall come home again? and when I return, whether ever I shall go abroad again? It is not at sea only that life and death are within a few inches one of another; but they are as near everywhere else too, only we do not take so much notice of it. What have we to do with frivolous and captious questions and impertinent niceties? Let us rather study how to deliver ourselves from sadness, fear, and the burthen of all our secret lusts. Let us pass over all our most solemn levities, and make haste to a good life, which is a thing that presses us. Shall a man that goes for a midwife stand gaping upon a post to see what play to-day? or when his house is on fire, stay the curling of a periwig before he calls for help? Our houses are on fire, our country invaded, our goods taken away, our children in danger, and I might add to these the calamities of earthquakes, shipwrecks, and whatever else is most terrible. Is this a time for us now to be playing fast and loose with idle questions, which are in effect but so many unprofitable riddles? Our duty is the cure of the mind rather than the delight of it; but we have only the words of wisdom without the works, and turn philosophy into a pleasure that was given for a remedy. What can be more ridiculous than for a man to neglect his manners,

and compose his style? We are sick and ulcerous, and must be lanced and scarified; and every man has as much business within himself as a physician in a common pestilence. Misfortunes, in fine, cannot be avoided; but they may be sweetened if not overcome, and our lives may be made happy by philosophy.

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Force of Precepts.*



HERE seems to be so near an affinity betwixt wisdom, philosophy, and good counsels, that it is rather matter of curiosity than of profit to divide them, philosophy being only a limited wisdom, and good counsels a communication of that wisdom for the good of others as well as of ourselves, and to posterity as well as to the present. The wisdom of the ancients, as to the government of life, was no more than certain precepts what to do and what not; and men were much better in that simplicity, for as they came to be more learned they grew less careful of being good. That plain and open virtue is now turned into a dark and intricate science, and we are taught to dispute rather than to live. So long as wickedness was simple, simple remedies also were sufficient against it; but now it has taken root and spread, we must make use of stronger.

THE BEST OF US ARE YET THE BETTER FOR  
ADMONITION AND PRECEPT.

There are some dispositions that embrace good things as soon as they hear them, but they will still

need quickening by admonition and precept. We are rash and forward in some cases, and dull in others, and there is no repressing of the one humour or raising of the other but by removing the causes of them, which are (in one word) false admiration and false fear. Every man knows his duty to his country, to his friends, to his guests, and yet when he is called upon to draw his sword for the one, or to labour for the other, he finds himself distracted betwixt his apprehensions and delights; so that it is not enough to give good advice unless we can take away that which hinders the benefit of it. If a man does what he ought to do, he will never do it constantly or equally without knowing why he does it; and if it be only chance, or custom, he that does well by chance may do ill so too. And farther, a precept may direct us what we ought to do, and yet fall short in the manner of doing it. An expensive entertainment may, in one case, be extravagance or gluttony, and yet a point of honour and discretion in another. Precepts are idle, if we be not first taught what opinion we are to have of the matter in question, whether it be Poverty, Riches, Disgrace, Sickness, or Banishment. Let us therefore examine them one by one; not what they are called, but what in truth they are. And so for the virtues: it is to no purpose to set a high esteem upon Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice, if we do not first know what virtue is, whether one or more, or if he that has one has all, or how they differ.

## THE POWER OF PRECEPTS AND SENTENCES.

Precepts are of great weight, and a few useful ones at hand do more toward a happy life than whole volumes of cautions that we know not where to find. These solitary precepts should be our daily meditation, for they are the rules by which we ought to square our lives. When they are contracted into sentences they strike the affections, whereas admonition is only blowing of the coal; it moves the vigour of the mind and excites virtue. We have the thing already, but we know not where it lies. It is by precepts that the understanding is nourished and augmented; the offices of prudence and justice are guided by them, and they lead us to the execution of our duties. A precept delivered in verse has a much greater effect than in prose; and those very people that never think they have enough, let them but hear a sharp sentence against avarice, how will they clap and admire it, and bid open defiance to money! So soon as we find the affections struck, we must follow the blow, not with syllogisms or quirks of wit, but with plain and weighty reason; and we must do it with kindness too, and respect, for there goes a blessing along with counsels and discourses that are bent wholly upon the good of the hearer. And those are still the most efficacious that take reason along with them, and tell us as well why we are to do this or that, as what we are to do; for some understandings are weak, and need an instructor to expound to them what is good and what is evil. It is a great virtue to follow good counsel; if it

does not lead us to honesty, it does at least prompt us to it. As several parts make up but one harmony, and the most agreeable music arises from discords, so should a wise man gather many acts, many precepts, and the examples of many arts, to inform his own life. It is not to say, in case of admonition, I knew this before, for we know many things, but we do not think of them, so that it is the part of a monitor not so much to teach as to mind us of our duties. Sometimes a man oversees that which lies just under his nose; otherwhile he is careless, or pretends not to see it. For instance, we all know that friendship is sacred, and yet we violate it; and the greatest libertine expects that his own wife should be honest.

GOOD COUNSEL IS THE BEST SERVICE WE CAN DO  
TO MANKIND.

Good counsel is the most needful service we can do to mankind, and if we give it to many, it will be sure to profit some; for of many trials, some or other will undoubtedly succeed. He that places a man in the possession of himself does a great thing, for wisdom does not show itself so much in precept as in life, in a firmness of mind, and a mastery of appetite; it teaches us to do as well as to talk, and to make our words and actions all of a colour. If that fruit be pleasantest which we gather from a tree of our own planting, how much greater delight shall we take in the growth and increase of good manners of our own forming? It is an eminent mark of wisdom

for a man to be always like himself. You shall have some that keep a thrifty table, and lash out upon building; profuse upon themselves, and sordid, to others; niggardly at home, and lavish abroad. This diversity is vicious, and the effect of a dissatisfied and uneasy mind, whereas every wise man lives by rule. This disagreement of purposes arises from hence: either that we do not propound to ourselves what we would be at, or if we do, that we do not pursue it, but pass from one thing to another; and we do not only change neither, but return to the very thing which we had both quitted and condemned.

THREE POINTS TO BE EXAMINED IN ALL OUR  
UNDERTAKINGS.

In all our undertakings let us first examine our own strength, the enterprise next, and, thirdly, the persons with whom we have to do. The first point is most important, for we are apt to overvalue ourselves, and reckon that we can do more than indeed we can. One man sets up for a speaker, and is out as soon as he opens his mouth; another overcharges his estate, perhaps, or his body; a bashful man is not fit for public business; some again are too stiff and peremptory for the court. Many people are apt to fly out in their anger; nay, and in a frolic too, if any sharp thing fall in their way, they will rather venture a neck than lose a jest. These people had better be quiet in the world than busy. Let him that is naturally choleric and impatient avoid all provocations,

and those affairs also that multiply and draw on more, and those also from which there is no retreat. When we may come off at pleasure, and fairly hope to bring our matters to a period, it is well enough. Let us covet nothing out of our reach, but content ourselves with things hopeful and at hand, and without envying the advantages of others; for greatness stands upon a craggy precipice, and it is much safer and quieter living upon a level. How many great men are forced to keep their station upon mere necessity, because they find there is no coming down from it but headlong? These men should do well to fortify themselves against ill consequences by such virtues and meditations as may make them less solicitous for the future. The surest expedient in this case is to bound our desires, and to leave nothing to fortune which we may keep in our own power. Neither will this course wholly compose us, but it shows us, at worst, the end of our troubles.

PROPOSE NOTHING BUT WHAT IS HOPEFUL AND HONEST.

It is a main point to take care that we propose nothing but what is hopeful and honest, for it will be equally troublesome to us either not to succeed or to be ashamed of success. Wherefore, let us be sure not to admit any ill design into our heart, that we may lift up pure hands to heaven, and ask nothing which another shall be a loser by. Let us pray for a good mind, which is a wish to no man's injury. I will remember always that I am a man, and then consider



that if I am happy it will not last always; if unhappy, I may be other if I please. I will carry my life in my hand, and deliver it up readily when it shall be called for. I will have a care of being a slave to myself, for it is a perpetual, a shameful, and the heaviest of all servitudes; and this may be done by moderate desires. I will say to myself, What is it that I labour, sweat, and solicit for, when it is but very little that I want, and it will not be long that I shall need anything? He that would make a trial of the firmness of his mind, let him set certain days apart for the practice of his virtues. Let him mortify himself with fasting, coarse clothes, and hard lodging, and then say to himself, Is this the thing now that I was afraid of? In a state of security a man may thus prepare himself against hazards, and in plenty fortify himself against want. If you will have a man resolute when he comes to the push, train him up to it beforehand. The soldier does duty in peace, that he may be in breath when he comes to battle. It is as easy to suffer it always as to try it once, and it is no more than thousands of servants and poor people do every day of their lives. He that would live happily must neither trust to good fortune nor submit to bad; he must stand upon his guard against all assaults; he must stick to himself, without any dependence upon other people.

ON THE MANNER OF GIVING COUNSEL.

It is easier to give counsel than to take it, and a common thing for one choleric man to condemn another. • We may be sometimes earnest in advising, but not violent or tedious. Few words, with gentleness and efficacy, are best ; the misery is, that the wise do not need counsel, and fools will not take it. A good man, it is true, delights in it, and it is a mark of folly and ill-nature to hate reproof. To a friend I would be always frank and plain, and rather fail in the success than be wanting in the matter of faith and trust. There are some precepts that serve in common both to the rich and poor, but they are too general ; as cure your avarice and the work is done. It is one thing not to desire money, and another thing not to understand how to use it. In the choice of the persons we have to do withal, we should see that they be worth our while. He that gives sober advice to a witty droll must look to have everything turned into ridicule. In answer to those who chide philosophers for being as much in love with the world as other people, we are all sick, I must confess, and it is not for sick men to play the physicians ; but it is yet lawful for a man in an hospital to discourse of the common condition and distempers of the place. He that should pretend to teach a madman how to speak, walk, and behave himself, were not he the madder man of the two ? He that directs the pilot makes him move the helm, order the sails so or so, and make the best of a scant wind, after this or that manner.

And so should we do in our counsels. Do not tell me what a man should do in health or poverty, but show me the way to be either sound or rich. Teach me to master my vices, for it is to no purpose, so long as I am under their government, to tell me what I must do when I am clear of it. In case of an avarice a little eased, a luxury moderated, a temerity restrained, a sluggish humour quickened—precepts will then help us forward, and tutor us how to behave ourselves. It is the first and the main tie of a soldier, his military oath, which is an engagement upon him both of religion and honour. In like manner, he that pretends to a happy life must first lay a foundation of virtue, as a bond upon him, to live and die true to that cause. We do not find felicity in the veins of the earth, where we dig for gold, nor in the bottom of the sea, where we fish for pearl; but in a pure and untainted mind, which, if it were not holy, were not fit to entertain the deity. He that would be truly happy must think his own lot best, and so live with men, as considering that God sees him, and so speak to God as if man heard him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *No Felicity like Peace of Conscience.*



*GOOD conscience is the testimony of a good life, and the reward of it.* This is it that fortifies the mind against fortune, when a man has gotten the mastery of his passions, placed his treasure and his security within himself, learned to be content with his condition, and that death is no evil in itself, but only the end of man. Every man has a judge and a witness within himself of all good and ill that he does, which inspires us with great thoughts, and administers to us wholesome counsels. To see a man fearless in dangers, untainted with lusts, happy in adversity, composed in a tumult, and laughing at all those things which are generally either coveted or feared—all men must acknowledge that this can be nothing else but a beam of divinity that influences a mortal body. A great, a good, and a right mind is a kind of divinity lodged in flesh ; it came from heaven and to heaven it must return ; and it is a kind of heavenly felicity which a pure and virtuous mind enjoys, in some degree, even upon earth ; whereas temples of honour are but empty names, which probably owe their beginning either to

ambition or to violence. I am strangely transported with the thoughts of eternity; nay, with the belief of it, for I have a profound veneration for the opinions of great men, especially when they promise things so much to my satisfaction, for they do promise them, though they do not prove them. In the question of the immortality of the soul, it goes very far with me, a general consent to the opinion of a future reward and punishment, which meditation raises me to the contempt of this life, in hopes of a better. But still, though we know that we have a soul, yet what the soul is, how, and from whence, we are utterly ignorant. This only we understand, that all the good and ill we do is under the dominion of the mind, that a clear conscience states us in an inviolable peace, and that the greatest blessing in nature is that which every honest man may bestow upon himself. The body is but the clog and prisoner of the mind, tossed up and down, and persecuted with punishments, violences, and diseases; but the mind itself is sacred and eternal, and exempt from the danger of all actual impression.

EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IS HIS JUDGE.

Provided that we look to our consciences, regardless of opinion; let me deserve well though I hear ill. The common people take stomach and audacity for the marks of magnanimity and honour, and if a man be soft and modest, they look upon him as an easy fop; but when they come once to observe the dignity of his mind in the equality and firmness of his actions,

and that his external quiet is founded upon an internal peace, the very same people have him in esteem and admiration, for there is no man but approves of virtue, though but few pursue it. We see where it is, but we dare not venture to come at it; and the reason is, we overvalue that which we must quit to obtain it. A good conscience fears no witnesses, but a guilty conscience is solicitous, even in solitude. If we do nothing but what is honest, let all the world know it; but if otherwise, what does it signify to have nobody else know it, so long as I know it myself? Miserable is he that slights that witness! Wickedness, it is true, may escape the law, but not the conscience, for a private conviction is the first and the greatest punishment of offenders, so that sin plagues itself, and the fear of vengeance pursues even those that escape the stroke of it. It were ill for good men that iniquity may so easily evade the law, the judge, and the execution, if nature had not set up torments and gibbets in the consciences of transgressors. He that is guilty lives in perpetual terror, and while he expects to be punished he punishes himself, and whosoever deserves it expects it. What if he be not detected? He is still in apprehension yet that he may be so. His sleeps are painful and never secure, and he cannot speak of another man's wickedness without thinking of his own; whereas a good conscience is a continual feast. Those are the only certain and profitable delights which arise from the conscience of a well-acted life. No matter for noise abroad so long as we are quiet within; but if our passions be seditious, that

is enough to keep us waking, without any other tumult. It is not the posture of the body or the composure of the bed that will give rest to an uneasy mind. There is an impatient sloth that may be roused by action, and the vices of laziness must be cured by business. True happiness is not to be found in excesses of wine, nor in the largest prodigalities of fortune. What she has given me she may take away, but she shall not tear it from me, and so long as it does not grow to me I can part with it without pain. He that would perfectly know himself, let him set aside his money, his fortune, his dignity, and examine himself naked, without being put to learn from others the knowledge of himself.

#### LET EVERY MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF.

It is dangerous for a man too suddenly or too easily to believe himself. Wherefore let us examine, watch, observe, and inspect our own hearts, for we ourselves are our own greatest flatterers. We should every night call ourselves to an account. What infirmity have I mastered to-day? What passion opposed? What temptation resisted? What virtue acquired? Our vices will abate of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift. Oh the blessed sleep that follows such a diary! Oh the tranquillity, liberty, and greatness of that mind that is a spy upon itself, and a private censor of its own manners! It is my custom every night, so soon as the candle is out, to run all over the words and actions of the past day; and I let

nothing escape me; for why should I fear the sight of my errors when I can admonish and forgive myself? I was a little too hot in such a dispute: my opinion might have been as well spared, for it gave offence, and did no good at all. The thing was true; but all truths are not to be spoken at all times. I would I had held my tongue, for there is no contending either with fools or our superiors. I have done ill, but it shall be so no more. If every man would but thus look into himself, it would be the better for us all. What can be more reasonable than this daily review of a life that we cannot warrant for a moment? Our fate is set, and the first breath we draw is only the first motion toward our last. There is a great variety in our lives, but all tends to the same issue. We are born to lose and to perish, to hope and to fear, to vex ourselves and others, and there is no antidote against a common calamity but virtue; for the foundation of true joy is in the conscience.



## CHAPTER VII.

*A Good Man can never be Miserable, nor a Wicked Man Happy.*



HERE is not in the scale of nature a more inseparable connection of cause and effect than in the case of happiness and virtue, nor anything that more naturally produces the one or more necessarily presupposes the other; for what is it to be happy but for a man to content himself with his lot in a cheerful and quiet resignation to the appointments of God? All the actions of our lives ought to be governed with a respect to good and evil; and it is only reason that distinguishes. As the beams of the sun irradiate the earth, and yet remain where they were, so is it in some proportion with an holy mind, that illumines all our actions and yet adheres to its original. Why do we not as well commend a horse for his glorious trappings as a man for his pompous additions? It is not health, nobility, riches, that can justify a wicked man; nor is it the want of all these that can discredit a good one. That is the sovereign blessing which makes the possessor of it valuable without anything else, and him that wants it contemptible, though he had all the world besides. It is not the painting,

gilding, or carving that makes a good ship; but if she be a nimble sailer, tight and strong to endure the seas, that is her excellence. It is the edge and temper of the blade that makes a good sword, not the richness of the scabbard; and so it is not money or possessions that make a man considerable, but his virtue.

A GOOD MAN MAKES HIMSELF PROFITABLE TO MANKIND.

It is every man's duty to make himself profitable to mankind: if he can, to many; if not, to fewer: if not to his neighbours, at least to himself. There are two republics—a great one, which is human nature; and a less, which is the place where we were born. Some serve both at a time; some only the greater, and some again only the less. The greater may be served in privacy, solitude, contemplation, and perchance that way better than any other; but it was the intent of nature, however, that we should serve both. A good man may serve the public, his friend, and himself, in any station. If he be not for the sword, let him take the gown; if the bar does not agree with him, let him try the pulpit; if he be silenced abroad, let him give counsel at home, and discharge the part of a faithful friend and a temperate companion. When he is no longer a citizen, he is yet a man; but the whole world is his country, and human nature is never in want of matter to work upon. But if nothing will serve a man in the civil government unless he be prime minister, or in the field but to command in chief, it is his own fault. The common soldier, where he cannot use his hands, fights with

his looks, his example, his encouragement, his voice, and stands his ground even when he has lost his hands, and does service too with his very clamour ; so that in any condition whatsoever he still discharges the duty of a good patriot. Nay, he that spends his time well, even in retirement, gives a great example. We may enlarge, indeed, or contract, according to the circumstances of time, place, or abilities, but above all things we must be sure to keep ourselves in action ; for he that is slothful is dead even while he lives.

THE INJURIES OF FORTUNE DO NOT AFFECT THE MIND.

It is not for a wise man to stand shifting and fencing with fortune, but to oppose her barefaced ; for he is sufficiently convinced that she can do him no hurt. She may take away his servants, possessions, dignity, assault his body, put out his eyes, cut off his hands, and strip him of all the external comforts of life ; but what does this all amount to more than the recalling of a trust, which he has received, with condition to deliver it up again upon demand ? He looks upon himself as precarious, and only lent to himself ; and yet he does not value himself ever the less because he is not his own, but takes such care as an honest man should do of a thing that is committed to him in trust. Whensoever he that lent me myself, and what I have, shall call for all back again, it is not a loss, but a restitution ; and I must willingly deliver up what most undeservedly was bestowed upon me. And it will become me to return my mind better than I received it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The due Contemplation of Divine Providence is the certain Cure of all Misfortunes.*



HOWEVER observes the world, and the order of it, will find all the motions in it to be only vicissitude of falling and rising: nothing extinguished, and even those things which seem to us to perish are in truth but changed. The seasons go and return; day and night follow in their courses; the heavens roll, and nature goes on with her work. All things succeed in their turns; storms and calms. The law of nature will have it so, which we must follow and obey, accounting all things that are done to be well done, so that what we cannot mend we must suffer, and wait upon providence without repining. It is the part of a cowardly soldier to follow his commander, groaning; but a generous man delivers himself up to God without struggling; and it is only for a narrow mind to condemn the order of the world, and to propound rather the mending of nature than of himself. No man has any cause of complaint against providence, if that which is right pleases him. Those glories that appear fair to the eye, their lustre is but false and superficial, and they are only vanity

and delusion ; they are rather the goods of a dream than a substantial possession. They may cozen us at a distance, but bring them once to the touch, they are rotten and counterfeit. There are no greater wretches in the world than many of those whom the people take to be happy. Those are the only true and incorruptible comforts that will abide all trials ; and the more we turn and examine them the more valuable we find them ; and the greatest felicity of all is, not to stand in need of any. What is poverty ? no man lives so poor as he was born. What is pain ? it will either have an end itself, or make an end of us. In short, fortune has no weapon that reaches the mind ; but the bounties of providence are certain and permanent blessings, and they are the greater, and the better, the longer we consider them ; that is to say, the power of contemning things terrible, and despising what the common people covet. In the very methods of nature we cannot but observe the regard that providence had to the good of mankind even in the disposition of the world, in providing so amply for our maintenance and satisfaction. It is not possible for us to comprehend what the power is which has made all things. Some few sparks of that divinity are discovered, but infinitely the greater part of it lies hid. We are all of us, however, thus far agreed — first, in the acknowledgment and belief of that almighty being ; and secondly, that we are to ascribe to it all majesty and goodness.

HOW COMES IT THAT GOOD MEN ARE AFFLICTED IN  
THIS WORLD AND WICKED MEN PROSPER ?

• If there be a providence, say some, how comes it to pass that good men labour under affliction and adversity, and wicked men enjoy themselves in ease and plenty ? My answer is, that God deals by us as a good Father does by his children ; he tries us, he hardens us, and fits us for himself. He keeps a strict hand over those that he loves, and by the rest he does as we do by our slaves—he lets them go on in license and boldness. As the master gives his most hopeful scholars the hardest lessons, so does God deal with the most generous spirits ; and cross encounters of fortune we are not to look upon as a cruelty, but as a contest. The familiarity of dangers brings us to the contempt of them, and that part is strongest which is most exercised. The seaman's hand is callous, the soldier's arm is strong, and the tree that is most exposed to the wind takes the best root. There are people that live in a perpetual winter, in extremity of frost and penury, where a cave, a whisp of straw, or a few leaves is all their covering, and wild beasts their nourishment. All this by custom is not only made tolerable, but when once it is taken up upon necessity, by little and little it becomes pleasant to them. Why should we, then, count that condition of life a calamity which is the lot of many nations ? There is no state of life so miserable but there are in it remissions, diversions ; nay, and delights too, such is the benignity of nature towards us, even in the severest accidents of human

life. We are apt to murmur at many things as great evils that have nothing at all of evil in them beside the complaint, which we should more reasonably take up against ourselves. If I be sick, it is part of my fate ; and for other calamities, they are usual things ; so that we should not only submit to God, but assent to him, and obey him out of duty, even if there were no necessity. All those terrible appearances that make us groan and tremble are but the tribute of life : we are neither to wish, nor to ask, nor to hope to escape them ; for it is a kind of dishonesty to pay a tribute unwillingly. Am I troubled with disease or afflicted with continual losses ? nay, is my body in danger ? All this is no more than what I prayed for, when I prayed for old age ; all these things are as familiar in a long life as dust and dirt in a long way. Fortune does like a swordsman : she scorns to encounter a fearful man ; there is no honour in the victory where there is no danger in the way to it. In suffering for virtue, it is not the torment but the cause that we are to consider, and the more pain, the more renown. When any hardship befalls us, we must look upon it as an act of providence, which many times suffers particulars to be wounded for the conservation of the whole. Beside that, God chastises some people under an appearance of blessing them, turning their prosperity to their ruin, as a punishment for abusing his goodness. And we are farther to consider, that many a good man is afflicted, only to teach others to suffer ; for we are born for example : and likewise, that where men are contumacious and

refractory, it pleases God many times to cure greater evils by less, and to turn our miseries to our advantage.

PROVIDENCE DRAWS GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

How many casualties and difficulties are there that we dread as insupportable mischiefs, which, upon farther thoughts, we find to be mercies and benefits? as banishment, poverty, loss of relations, sickness, disgrace. Some are cured by the lancet, by fire, hunger, thirst, taking out of bones, amputation, and the like. Nor do we only fear things that are many times beneficial to us, but, on the other side, we hanker after and pursue things that are deadly and pernicious; we are poisoned in the very pleasures of our luxury, and betrayed to a thousand diseases by the indulging of our palate. To lose a child or a limb is only to part with what we have received, and nature may do what she pleases with her own. We are frail ourselves, and we have received things transitory; that which was given us may be taken away. Calamity tries virtue, as the fire does gold; nay, he that lives most at ease is only delayed, not dismissed, and his portion is to come. When we are visited with sickness or other afflictions, we are not to murmur as if we were ill-used: it is a mark of the general's esteem when he puts us upon a post of danger. We do not say, My captain uses me ill, but He does me honour; and so should we say, that are commanded to encounter difficulties, for this is our case with God Almighty.



## CALAMITY IS THE TRIAL OF VIRTUE.

What was Regulus the worse because fortune made choice of him for an eminent instance, both of faith and patience? He was thrown into a case of wood stuck with pointed nails, so that which way soever he turned his body it rested upon his wounds; his eyelids were cut off, to keep him waking; and yet Mænas was not happier upon his bed than Regulus\* upon his torments. Nay, the world is not yet grown so wicked as not to prefer Regulus to Mænas; and can any man take that to be an evil of which providence accounted this brave man worthy? "It has pleased God," says he, "to single me out for an experiment of the force of human nature." No man knows his own strength or value but by being put to the proof. The pilot is tried in a storm; the soldier in a battle; the rich man knows not how to behave himself in poverty. He that has lived in popularity and applause knows not how he would bear infamy and reproach, nor he that never had children, how he would bear the loss of them. Calamity is the occasion of virtue, and a spur to a great mind. The very

\* The story of Regulus is perhaps too well known to need comment. Briefly, he was a Roman general taken prisoner by the Carthaginians, but liberated on parole that he might return to Rome, where they hoped he would use his influence in obtaining peace on terms dishonourable to his countrymen. He, however, threw the whole weight of his influence into the opposite scale, and, resisting all the persuasions of his friends to break his parole and remain at Rome, returned to Carthage, where the death recorded in the text awaited him.

apprehension of a wound startles a man when he first bears arms ; but an old soldier bleeds boldly, because he knows that a man may lose blood and yet win the day.

ACCIDENTS ARE NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL.

'To show now that the favours or the crosses of fortune, and the accidents of sickness and of health, are neither good nor evil, God permits them, indifferently, both to good and evil men. It is hard, you will say, for a virtuous man to suffer all sorts of misery, and for a wicked man not only to go free, but to enjoy himself at pleasure. We should say, " If I had known the will of heaven before I was called to it, I would have offered myself. If it be the pleasure of God to take my children, I have brought them up to that end. If my fortune, any part of my body, or my life, I would rather present it than yield it up. I am ready to part with all, and to suffer all ; for I know that nothing comes to pass but what God appoints." Our fate is decreed, and things do not so much happen as in their due time proceed, and every man's portion of joy and sorrow is predetermined.

Providence treats us like a generous father, and brings us up to labours, toils, and dangers ; whereas the indulgence of a fond mother makes us weak and spiritless. God loves us with a masculine love, and turns us loose to injuries and indignities. He takes delight to see a brave and a good man wrestling with evil fortune, and yet keeping himself upon his legs, when the whole world is in disorder about him.

No man can be happy that does not stand firm against all contingencies, and say to himself, in all extremities, "I should have been content, if it might have been so, or so ; but since it is otherwise determined, God will provide better." The more we struggle with our necessities, we draw the knot the harder, and the worse it is with us ; and the more the bird flaps and flutters in the snare, the surer she is caught ; so that the best way is to submit, and lie still, under this double consideration, that *the proceedings of God are unquestionable, and his decrees not to be resisted.*

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Of Levity of Mind and other Impediments of a Happy Life.*



NOW, to sum up what is already deliver'd, we have shown what happiness is, and wherein it consists—that it is founded upon wisdom and virtue ; for we must first know what we ought to do, and then live according to that knowledge. We have also discoursed the helps of philosophy and precepts towards a *Happy Life* : the blessing of a good conscience ; that a good man can never be miserable, nor a wicked man happy ; nor any man unfortunate, that cheerfully submits to providence. We shall now examine how it comes to pass that, when the certain way to happiness lies so fair before us, men will yet steer their course on the other side, which as manifestly leads to ruin.

#### IMPEDIMENTS OF HAPPINESS.

There are some that live without any design at all, and only pass in the world like straws upon a river ; they do not go, but they are carried. Others only deliberate upon the parts of life, and not upon the whole, which is a great error, for there

is no disposing of the circumstances of it, unless we first propound the main scope. How shall any man take his aim without a mark? or what wind will serve him that is not yet resolved upon his port? "We live, as it were, by chance, and by chance we are governed. Some there are that torment themselves afresh with the memory of what is past; others, again, afflict themselves with the apprehension of evils to come: and very ridiculously both; for the one does not now concern us, and the other not yet. Besides, there may be remedies for mischiefs likely to happen, for they give us warning by signs and symptoms of their approach. Let him that would be quiet take heed not to provoke men that are in power, but live without giving offence; and if we cannot make all great men our friends, it will suffice to keep them from being our enemies. This is a thing we must avoid as a mariner would do a storm. A rash seamen never considers what wind blows or what course he steers, but runs at a venture, as if he would brave the rocks and the eddies; whereas he that is careful and considerate informs himself beforehand where the danger lies, and what weather it is like to be. He consults his compass, and keeps aloof from those places that are infamous for wrecks and miscarriages. So does a wise man in the common business of life: he keeps out of the way from those that may do him hurt; but it is a point of prudence not to let them take notice that he does it on purpose, for that which a man shuns he tacitly condemns. Let him have care also of listeners,

newsmongers, and meddlers in other people's matters ; for their discourse is commonly of such things as are never profitable, and most commonly dangerous either to be spoken or heard.

LEVITY OF MIND IS A GREAT HINDRANCE OF  
OUR REPOSE.

Levity of mind is a great hindrance of repose, and the very change of wickedness is an addition to the wickedness itself ; for it is inconstancy added to iniquity. Some people are never quiet, others are always so ; and they are both to blame ; for that which looks like vivacity and industry in the one is only a restlessness and agitation ; and that which passes in the other for moderation and reserve is but a drowsy and an inactive sloth. Let motion and rest both take their turns according to the order of nature, which makes both the day and the night. Some are perpetually shifting from one thing to another ; others, again, make their whole life but a kind of uneasy sleep. Some lie tossing and turning till very weariness brings them to rest ; others, again, I cannot so properly call fickle as lazy. There are many peculiarities and diversities of vice, but it is one never-failing effect of it to live displeased. We do all of us labour under inordinate desires ; we are either timorous and dare not venture, or venturing, we do not succeed ; or else we cast ourselves upon uncertain hopes, where we are perpetually solicitous and in suspense. In this distraction we are apt to propose

to ourselves things dishonest and hard ; and when we have taken great pains to no purpose, we come then to repent of our undertakings. We are afraid to go on, and we can neither master our appetites nor obey them ; we live and die restless and irresolute ; and, which is worst of all, when we grow weary of the public, and betake ourselves to solitude for relief, our minds are sick and wallowing, and the very house and walls are troublesome to us. We grow impatient and ashamed of ourselves, and suppress our inward vexation until it breaks our heart for want of vent. This is it that makes us sour and morose, envious of others, and dissatisfied with ourselves, until at last, betwixt our troubles for other people's successes and the despair of our own, we fall foul upon fortune and the times, and get into a corner, perhaps, where we sit brooding over our own disquiets.

CHANGE OF PLACES DOES NO GOOD WITHOUT  
CHANGE OF MIND.

This is it that sends us upon rambling voyages—the town pleases us to-day, the country to-morrow ; the splendours of the court at one time ; the horrors of a wilderness at another. But all this while we carry our plague about us ; for it is not the place we are weary of, but ourselves. Nay, our weakness extends to everything, for we are impatient equally of toil and of pleasure. This trotting of the ring, and only treading the same steps over and over again, has made

many a man lay violent hands upon himself. 'It must be the change of the mind, not of the climate, that will remove the heaviness of the heart; our vices go along with us, and we carry in ourselves the causes of our disquiets. There is a great weight lies upon us, and the bare shaking of it makes it the more uneasy. Changing of countries, in this case, is not travelling, but wandering. We must keep on our course, if we would gain our journey's end. He that cannot live happily anywhere will live happily nowhere. What is a man the better for travelling? as if his cares could not find him out wherever he goes. Is there any retiring from the fear of death, or of torments, or from those difficulties which beset a man wherever he is? Frequent changing of places or councils shows an instability of mind, and we must fix the body before we can fix the soul. We travel as children run up and down after strange sights—for novelty, not profit. We return neither the better nor the sounder; nay, and the very agitation hurts us. We learn to call towns and places by their names, and to tell stories of mountains and of rivers; but had not our time been better spent in the study of wisdom and of virtue, in the learning of what is already discovered, and in the quest of things not yet found out? If a man break his leg, or strain his ankle, he sends presently for a surgeon to set all right again, and does not thereupon take horse, or put himself on shipboard. No more does the change of place work upon our disordered minds than upon our bodies. It is not the place, I hope, that



makes either an orator or a physician. Will any man ask upon the road, "Pray, which is the way to prudence, to justice, to temperance, to fortitude?" No matter whither any man goes that carries his affections along with him, he that would make his travels delightful must make himself a temperate companion. A great traveller was complaining that he was never the better for his travels. "That is very true," said Socrates, "because you travelled with yourself." Now, had not he better have made himself another man, than to transport himself to another place? It is no matter what manners we find anywhere, so long as we carry our own. As levity is a pernicious enemy to quiet, so undue pertinacity is a great one too. The latter changes nothing, the former sticks to nothing; and which of the two is the worse may be a question.

CONSTANCY OF MIND SECURES US IN ALL  
DIFFICULTIES.

One sovereign remedy against all misfortunes is constancy of mind. The changing of parties and countenances looks as if a man were driven with the wind. Nothing can be above him that is above fortune. It is not violence, reproach, contempt, or whatever else from without that can make a wise man quit his ground, but he is proof against calamities, both great and small; only our error is, that what we cannot do ourselves, we think nobody else can, so that we judge of the wise by the measures of the weak. Place me among princes, or among

beggars ; the one shall not make me proud, nor the other ashamed. I can take as sound a sleep in a barn as in a palace, and a straw mattress makes me as good a lodging as a bed of down. Should every day succeed to my wish, it should not transport me ; nor would I think myself miserable if I should not have one quiet hour in my whole life. I will not transport myself with either pain or pleasure ; but yet, for all that, I could wish that I had an easier game to play, and that I were put rather to moderate my joys than my sorrows. If I were an imperial prince, I had rather take than be taken ; and yet I would bear the same mind under the chariot of my conqueror that I had in my own. It is no great matter to trample upon those things that are most coveted or feared by the common people. There are those that will laugh upon the wheel, and cast themselves upon a certain death, only upon a transport of love, perhaps anger, avarice, or revenge ; how much more, then, upon an instinct of virtue, which is invincible and steady ? If a short obstinacy of mind can do this, how much more shall a composed and deliberate virtue, whose force is equal and perpetual ?

THE LESS WE HAVE TO DO WITH THE WORLD THE  
BETTER.

To secure ourselves in this world, first, we must aim at nothing that men count worth the wrangling for ; secondly, we must not value the possession of anything, which even a common thief would think worth

the stealing. A man's body is no booty. Let the way be never so dangerous for robberies, the poor and the naked pass quietly. A plain-dealing sincerity of manners makes a man's life happy, even in despite of scorn and contempt, which is every noble man's fate, and we had better yet be contemned for simplicity than lie perpetually upon the torture of a counterfeit, provided that care be taken not to confound simplicity with negligence; and it is moreover an uneasy life, that of a disguise; for a man to seem to be what he is not; to keep a perpetual guard upon himself, and to live in fear of a discovery. He takes every man that looks upon him for a spy, over and above the trouble of being put to play another man's part. It is a good remedy in some cases for a man to apply himself to civil affairs and public business; and yet, in this state of life too, what betwixt ambition and calumny, it is hardly safe to be honest. There are, indeed, some cases wherein a wise man will give way; but let him not yield over-easily neither. If he marches off, let him have a care of his honour, and make his retreat with his sword in his hand, and his face to the enemy. Of all others, a studious life is the least tiresome. It makes us easy to ourselves and to others, and gains us both friends and reputation.

## CHAPTER X.

*He that sets up his Rest upon Contingencies shall  
never be Quiet.*



NEVER pronounce any man happy that depends upon fortune for his happiness, for nothing can be more preposterous than to place the good of a reasonable creature in unreasonable things. If I have lost anything, it was adventitious ; and the less money, the less trouble ; the less favour, the less envy ; nay, even in those cases that put us out of our wits, it is not the loss itself, but the opinion of the loss that troubles us. It is a common mistake to account those things necessary that are superfluous, and to depend upon fortune for the felicity of life, which arises only from virtue. There is no trusting to her smiles ; the sea swells and rages in a moment, and the ships are swallowed up at night in the very place where they sported themselves in the morning. And fortune has the same power over princes that it has over empires ; over nations that it has over cities ; and the same power over cities that it has over private men. Where is that estate that may not be followed upon the heel with famine and beggary ? that dignity, which the next moment may not be laid in the dust ? that

kingdom that is secure from desolation and ruin? The period of all things is at hand—as well that which casts out the fortunate, as the other that delivers the unhappy; and that which may fall out at any time, may fall out this very day. What *shall* come to pass I know not, but what *may* come to pass I know; so that I will despair of nothing, but expect everything, and whatsoever providence remits, is clear gain. Every moment, if it spares me, deceives me, and yet in some sort it does not deceive me; for though I know that anything may happen, yet I know likewise that everything will not. I will hope the best, and provide for the worst. Methinks we should not find so much fault with fortune for her inconstancy, when we ourselves suffer a change every moment that we live; only other changes make more noise, and this steals upon us like the shadow upon a dial—every jot as certainly, but more insensibly.

#### THE UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN AFFAIRS.

All external things are under the dominion of fortune. One while she calls our hands to her assistance; another while she contents herself with her own force, and destroys us with mischiefs of which we cannot find the author. No time, place, or condition is excepted. She makes our very pleasures painful to us: she makes war upon us in the depth of peace, and turns the means of our security into an occasion of fear; she turns a friend into an enemy, and makes

a foe of a companion. We suffer the effects of war without any adversary, and rather than fail, our felicity shall be the cause of our destruction. Lest we should either forget or neglect her power, every day produces something extraordinary. She persecutes the most temperate with sickness, the strongest constitutions with disease; she brings the innocent to punishment, and the most retired she assaults with tumults. There is no felicity in anything, either private or public;—men, nations, and cities have all their fates and periods. Our very entertainments are not without terror, and our calamity rises there where we least expect it. Those kingdoms that stood the shock both of foreign wars and civil, come to destruction without the sight of an enemy. Nay, we are to dread our peace and felicity more than violence, because we are there taken unprovided; unless, in a state of peace, we do the duty of men in war, and say to ourselves, Whatsoever may be, will be. I am to-day safe and happy in the love of my country; I am to-morrow banished: to-day, in pleasure, peace, health; to-morrow, broken upon the wheel, led in triumph, and in the agony of sickness. Let us therefore prepare for a shipwreck in the port, and for a tempest in a calm. One violence drives me from my country, another ravishes that from me; and that very place where a man can hardly pass this day for a crowd, may be to-morrow a desert. Wherefore, let us set before our eyes the whole condition of human nature, and consider as well what may happen as what commonly does. The way to make future calamities easy

to us in the sufferance, is to make them familiar to us in the contemplation.

THAT WHICH WE CALL OUR OWN IS BUT LENT US.

That which we call our own is but lent us; and what we have received *gratis*, we must return without complaint. That which fortune gives us this hour she may take away the next; and he that trusts to her favours shall either find himself deceived, or if he be not, he will at least be troubled because he may be so. There is no defence in walls, fortifications, and engines against the power of fortune. We must provide ourselves within, and when we are safe there, we are invincible; we may be battered, but not taken. She throws her gifts among us, and we sweat and scuffle for them, never considering how few are the better for that which is expected by all. Some are transported with what they get, others tormented for what they miss; and many times there is a leg or an arm broken in a contest for a counter. She gives us honours, riches, favours, only to take them away again, either by violence or treachery, so that they frequently turn to the damage of the receiver. She throws out baits for us, and sets traps, as we do for birds and beasts. Her bounties are snares and lime-twigs to us; we think we take, but we are taken. If they had anything in them that were substantial, they would some time or other fill and quiet us; but they serve only to provoke our appetite, without anything more than pomp and show to allay it. But

the best of it is, if a man cannot mend his fortune, he may yet mend his manners, and put himself so far out of her reach, that whether she gives or takes, it shall be all one to us; for we are neither the greater for the one, nor the less for the other. We call this a dark room, or that a light one, when it is in itself neither the one nor the other, but only as the day and the night renders it. And so it is in riches, strength of body, beauty, honour, command; and likewise in pain, sickness, banishment, death, which are in themselves middle and indifferent things, and only good or bad as they are influenced by virtue. To weep, lament, and groan is to renounce our duty; and it is the same weakness on the other side to exult and rejoice. I would rather make my fortune than expect it, being neither depressed with her injuries nor dazzled with her favours. It is a great matter for a man to advance his mind above her threats or flatteries; for he that has once gotten the better of her is safe for ever.

## FORTUNE SPARES NEITHER GREAT NOR SMALL.

It is some comfort yet to the unfortunate, that great men lie under the lash as well, and that death spares the palace no more than the cottage, and that whoever is above me, has a power also above him. Do we not daily see funerals, untroubled princes deposed, countries depopulated, towns sacked, without so much as thinking how soon it may be our own case? Whereas, if we would but prepare, and



arm ourselves against the iniquities of fortune, we should never be surprised. When we see any man banished, beggared, tortured, we are to account that, although the mischief fell upon another, it was levelled at us. What wonder is it, if, of so many thousands of dangers that are constantly hovering about us, one comes to hit us at last? That which befalls any man may befall every man. Whatsoever our lot is, we must bear it; as, suppose it be continually, cruelty, fire, sword, pains, diseases, or prey to wild beasts; there is no struggling, nor any remedy but firmness. It is to no purpose to bewail any part of our life, when life itself is miserable throughout, and the whole flux of it only a course of transition from one misfortune to another. A man may as well wonder that he should be cold in winter, sick at sea, or have his bones clattered together in a waggon, as at the encounter of ill accidents and crosses in the passage of human life; and it is in vain to run away from fortune, as if there were any hiding-place wherein she could not find us, or to expect any quiet from her, for she makes life a perpetual state of war, without so much as any respite or truce. This we may conclude upon: that her empire is but imaginary, and that whosoever serves her, makes himself a voluntary slave; for the things that are often condemned by the inconsiderate, and always by the wise, are in themselves neither good nor evil;—as pleasure and pains, prosperity and adversity, which can only operate upon our outward condition, without any proper and necessary effect upon the mind.

## CHAPTER XL.

*A Sensual Life is a Miserable Life.*



THE sensuality that we here treat of falls naturally under the head of luxury, which extends to all the excesses of gluttony, lust, effeminacy of manners, and, in short, to whatsoever concerns the over-great care of the carcase.

THE EXCESSES OF LUXURY ARE PAINFUL AND  
DANGEROUS.

To begin, now, with the pleasures of the palate (which deal with us like thieves, that strangle those they rob). Wheresoever nature has placed men she has provided them aliment; but we rather choose to irritate hunger by expense than to allay it at an easier rate. Our forefathers (by force of whose virtues we are now supported in our vices) lived every jot as well as we, when they provided and dressed their own meat with their own hands, lodged upon the ground, and were not as yet come to the vanity of gold and gems.

IF SENSUALITY WERE HAPPINESS, BEASTS WERE  
HAPPIER THAN MEN.

It is a shame for a man to place his felicity in those entertainments and appetites that are stronger in brutes. Do not beasts eat with a better stomach? Have they not more satisfaction in their lusts? And they have not only a quicker relish of their pleasures, but they enjoy them without either scandal or remorse. If sensuality were happiness, beasts were happier than men; but human felicity is lodged in the soul, not in the flesh. They that deliver themselves up to luxury are still either tormented with too little or oppressed with too much, and equally miserable, by being either deserted or overwhelmed. They are like men in a dangerous sea—one while cast a-dry upon a rock, and another while swallowed up in a whirlpool; and all this from the mistake of not distinguishing good from evil. The huntsman that with much labour and hazard takes a wild beast, runs as great a risk afterwards in the keeping of him; for many times he tears out the throat of his master. And it is the same thing with inordinate pleasures: the more in number and the greater they are, the more general and absolute a slave is the servant of them. Let the common people pronounce him as happy as they please, he pays his liberty for his delights, and sells himself for what he buys.

## WE HAVE AS MANY DISEASES AS DISHES.

Let any man take a view of our kitchens, the number of our cooks, and the variety of our meats—will he not wonder to see so much provision made for one body? We have as many diseases as we have cooks or meats, and the service of the appetite is the study now in vogue, to say nothing of our trains of lacqueys, and our troops of caterers and sewers. Good God! that ever one body should employ so many people. How nauseous and fulsome are the surfeits that follow these excesses! Simple meats are out of fashion, and all are collected into one, so that the cook does the office of the stomach, nay, and of the teeth too, for the meat looks as if it were chewed beforehand. Here is the luxury of all tastes in one dish. From these compounded dishes arise compounded diseases, which require compounded medicines. It is the same thing with our minds that it is with our tables—simple vices are curable by simple counsels, but a general dissolution of manners is hardly overcome. We are overrun with a public as well as with a private madness. The physicians of old understood little more than the virtue of some herbs to stop blood, or heal a wound; and their firm and healthful bodies needed little more before they were corrupted by luxury and pleasure; and when it came to that once, their business was not to lay hunger, but to provoke it by a thousand inventions and sauces. That which was aliment to a craving stomach, is become a burthen to a full one.

From hence comes paleness, trembling, and worse effects from crudities than famine ; a weakness in the joints, the torpor of the nerves, and a palpitation of the heart. So long as our bodies were hardened with labour or tired with exercise or hunting, our food was plain and simple ; many dishes have made many diseases.

‘ DRUNKENNESS IS A VOLUNTARY MADNESS.

It is an ill thing for a man not to know the measure of his stomach, nor to consider that men do many things in their drink that they are ashamed of sober, drunkenness being nothing else but a voluntary madness. It emboldens men to do all sorts of mischiefs ; it both irritates wickedness and discovers it ; it does not make men vicious, but it shows them to be so. It makes him that is insolent, prouder ; him that is cruel, fiercer ; it takes away all shame. He that is peevish breaks out presently into ill words and blows. A man’s tongue trips, his head turns round, he staggers in his pace. To say nothing of the crudities and diseases that follow upon this distemper, consider the public mischiefs it has done. How many warlike nations, and strong cities that have stood invincible to attacks and sieges, has drunkenness overcome ? Is it not a great honour to drink the company dead ? a magnificent virtue to swallow more wine than the rest, and yet at last to be outdone by a hogshhead ? What shall we say of those men that invert the offices of day and night ? as if our eyes were only given us

to make use of in the dark? Is it day?—It is time to go to bed. Is it night?—It is time to rise. Is it towards morning?—Let us go to supper. When other people lie down, they rise, and lie till the next night to digest the debauch of the day before. It is an argument of clownery to do as other people do. Luxury steals upon us by degrees: first, it shows itself in a more than ordinary care of our bodies; it slips next into the furniture of our houses; and it gets then into the fabric, curiosity, and expense of the house itself. It appears, lastly, in the fantastical excesses of our tables. We change and shuffle our meats, confound our sauces, serve that in the first that used to be the last, and value our dishes, not for the taste, but for the rarity. Nay, we are so delicate that we must be told when we are to eat or drink, when we are hungry or weary; and we cherish some vices as proofs and arguments of our happiness. The most miserable mortals are they that deliver themselves up to their palates or to their lusts; the pleasure is short, and turns presently nauseous, and the end of it is either shame or repentance. It is a brutal entertainment, and unworthy of a man, to place his felicity in the service of his senses. As to the wrathful, the contentious, the ambitious, though the distemper be great, the offence has yet something in it that is manly.

#### THE FOLLY AND VANITY OF LUXURY.

What a deal of business is now made about our houses and diet, which was at first both obvious and

of little expense! Luxury led the way, and we have employed our wits in the aid of our vices. First, we desired superfluities; our next step was to wickedness; and in conclusion, we delivered up our minds to our bodies, and so became slaves to our appetites, which before were our servants, and are now become our masters. What was it that brought us to the extravagance of embroideries, perfumers, and tire-women? We passed the bounds of nature, and lashed out into superfluities; insomuch, that it is nowadays only for beggars and clowns to content themselves with what is sufficient. Our luxury makes us insolent and mad; we take upon us like princes, and fly out for every trifle as if there were life and death in the case. What a madness is it for a man to spend his estate upon a table or a cabinet, a patrimony upon a pair of pendants, and to raise the price of curiosities according to the hazard either of breaking or losing of them?—to wear garments that will neither defend a woman's body nor her modesty? How long shall we covet and oppress, enlarge our possessions, and account that too little for one man which was formerly enough for a nation? And our luxury is as insatiable as our avarice. Where's that lake, that sea, that forest, that spot of land that is not ransacked to gratify our palate? The very earth is burthened with our buildings; not a river nor a mountain escapes us. Oh that there should be such boundless desires in our little bodies! Would not fewer lodgings serve us? We lie but in one, and where we are not, that is not properly

ours. What with our hooks, snares, nets, and dogs, we are at war with all living creatures, and nothing comes amiss but that which is either too cheap or too common ; and all this is to gratify a fantastical palate. Our avarice, our ambition, our lusts, are insatiable ; we enlarge our possessions, swell our families ; we rifle sea and land for matter of ornament and luxury. A bull contents himself with one meadow, and one forest is enough for a thousand elephants ; but the little body of a man devours more than all other living creatures. We do not eat to satisfy hunger, but ambition ; we are dead while we are alive, and our houses are so much our tombs, that a man might write our epitaphs upon our very doors.

A VOLUPTUOUS PERSON CANNOT BE A GOOD MAN.

A voluptuous person, in fine, can neither be a good man, a good patriot, nor a good friend ; for his mind is unhinged by his appetites, not considering that the lot of man is the law of nature. A good man, like a good soldier, will stand his ground, receive wounds, glory in his scars, and in death itself, love his master for whom he falls ; with that divine precept always in his mind, *follow good*. Whereas he that complains, laments and groans, must yield, nevertheless, and do his duty, though in spite of his heart. Now, what a madness is it for a man to choose rather to be dragged than to follow, and vainly to contend with the calamities of human life ! Whatever is laid upon us by necessity we should receive generously,



betwixt old men and children? The one cries for nuts and apples, and the other for gold and silver. Throw a crust of bread to a dog, he takes it open-mouthed, swallows it whole, and presently gapes for more. Just so do we with the gifts of fortune; down they go without chewing, and we are immediately ready for another chop. But what has avarice now to do with gold and silver, that is so much outdone by curiosities of a far greater value? Let us no longer complain that there was not a heavier load laid upon those precious metals, or that they were not buried deep enough, when we have found out ways by wax and parchments, and by bloody usurious contracts, to undo one another. It is remarkable that providence has given us all things for our advantage near at hand; but iron, gold, and silver (being both the instruments of blood and slaughter, and the price of it), nature has hidden in the bowels of the earth.

#### AVARICE PUNISHES ITSELF.

There is no avarice without some punishment, over and above that which it is to itself. How miserable is it in the desire! how miserable even in the attaining of our ends! For money is a greater torment in the possession than it is in the pursuit. The fear of losing it is a great trouble, the loss of it a greater, and it is made a greater yet by opinion. Nay, even in the case of no direct loss at all, the covetous man loses what he does not get. It is true, the people call the rich man a happy man, and wish themselves

in his condition ; but can any condition be worse than that which carries vexation and envy along with it ? Neither is any man to boast of his fortune, his herds of cattle, his number of slaves, his lands and palaces ; for, comparing that which he has to that which he farther covets, he is a beggar. No man can possess all things, but any man may condemn them, and the contempt of riches is the nearest way to the gaining of them.

## MONEY DOES ALL.

Some magistrates are made for money, and those commonly are bribed with money. We are all turned merchants, and look not into the quality of things, but into the price of them ; for reward we are pious, and for reward again we are impious. We are honest so long as we thrive upon it ; but if the devil himself give better wages, we change our party. Our parents have trained us up into an admiration of gold and silver, and the love of it is grown up with us to that degree, that when we would show our gratitude to heaven, we make presents of those metals. This is it that makes poverty look like a curse and a reproach, and the poets help it forward : the chariot of the sun must be all of gold, the best of times must be the golden age, and thus they turn the greatest misery of mankind into the greatest blessings.

AVARICE MAKES US ILL-NATURED AS WELL AS  
MISERABLE.

Neither does avarice make us only unhappy in ourselves, but malevolent also to mankind. The soldier wishes for war; the husbandman would have his corn dear; the lawyer prays for dissension; the physician for a sickly year; he that deals in curiosities, for luxury and excess, and makes up his fortunes out of the corruptions of the age. High winds and public conflagrations make work for the carpenter and brick-layer, and one man lives by the loss of another; some few, perhaps, have the fortune to be detected, but they are all wicked alike. A great plague makes work for the sexton, and, in one word, whosoever gains by the dead, has not much kindness for the living. Demades\* of Athens condemned a fellow that sold necessities for funerals, upon proof that he wished to make himself a fortune by his trade, which could not be but by a great mortality. But perhaps he did not so much desire to have many customers, as to sell dear and buy cheap; besides that, all of that trade might have been condemned as well as he. Whatsoever whets our appetites flatters and enfeebles the mind, and by dilating it, weakens it, first blowing it up, and then filling and deluding it with vanity.

## THE CARES AND CRIMES THAT ATTEND AMBITION.

To proceed now from the most ignoble of vices, sensuality and avarice, to that which passes in the

An Athenian statesman, contemporary with Demosthenes.

world for the most generous, the thirst of glory and dominion. If they that run mad after wealth and honour could but look into the hearts of them that have already gained these points, how would it startle them to see those hideous cares and crimes that wait upon ambitious greatness. All those acquisitions that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar are but false pleasures, slippery, and uncertain. They are achieved with labour, and the very guard of them is painful. Ambition puffs us up with vanity and wind, and we are equally troubled either to see anybody before us, or nobody behind us, so that we lie under a double envy; for whosoever envies another is also envied himself. What matters it how far Alexander extended his conquests, if he was not yet satisfied with what he had? Every man wants as much as he covets, and it is lost labour to pour into a vessel that will never be full. He that had subdued so many princes and nations was yet a slave to his passions. Ambition aspires from great things to greater, and propounds matters even impossible when it has once arrived at things beyond expectation. It is a kind of dropsy—the more a man drinks, the more he covets. The passage to virtue is fair, but the way to greatness is craggy, and it stands not only upon a precipice, but upon ice too; and yet it is a hard matter to convince a great man that his station is slippery, or to prevail with him not to depend upon his greatness. But all superfluities are hurtful. Nay, though we ourselves would be at rest, our fortune will not suffer it. The way that leads to

honour and riches, leads to trouble, and we find the causes of our sorrows in the very objects of our delights. Ambition is like a gulf—everything is swallowed up in it and buried; beside the dangerous consequences of it; for that which one has taken from all may be easily taken away again by all from one. We impose upon our reason when we suffer ourselves to feel exalted by titles, for we know that they are nothing but a more glorious sound. And so for ornaments and gildings: though there may be a lustre to dazzle our eyes, our understanding tells us yet that it is only outside, and that the matter under it is only coarse and common.

MISERABLE ARE THOSE PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD  
ACCOUNT GREAT AND HAPPY.

I will never envy those that the people call great and happy. A sound mind is not to be shaken with a popular and vain applause, nor is it in the power of their pride to disturb the state of our happiness. An honest man is known nowadays by the dust he raises upon the way, and it is become a point of honour to overrun people, and keep all at a distance; though he that is put out of the way, may perchance be happier than he that takes it. He that would exercise a power profitable to himself, and grievous to nobody else, let him practise it upon his passions. They that have burnt cities, otherwise invincible, driven armies before them, and bathed themselves in human blood, after that they have overcome all open enemies, they

have been vanquished by their lust, by their cruelty, and without any resistance. Alexander was possessed with the madness of laying kingdoms waste. He began with Greece, where he was brought up, and there he seized upon that in it which was best. He enslaved Lacedemon, and silenced Athens. Nor was he content with the destruction of those towns which his father Philip had either conquered or bought, but he made himself the enemy of human nature, and, like the worst of beasts, he worried what he could not eat. Felicity is an unquiet thing: it torments itself, and puzzles the brain; it makes some people ambitious, others luxurious; it puffs up some, and softens others; only (as it is with wine) some heads bear it better than others. But it dissolves all. Greatness stands upon a precipice, and if prosperity carries a man never so little beyond his poise, it overbears and dashes him to pieces. It is a rare thing for a man in great prosperity to lay down his happiness gently, it being a common fate for a man to sink under the weight of those felicities that raise him.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *Hope and Fear are the Bane of Human Life.*



O man can be said to be perfectly happy that runs the risk of disappointment, which is the case of every man that fears or hopes for anything; for hope and fear, how distant soever they may seem to be the one from the other, they are both of them yet coupled in the same chain—as the guard and the prisoner—and the one treads on the heel of the other. The reason of this is obvious, for they are passions that look forward, and are very solicitous for the future, only hope is the more plausible weakness of the two. We may come to understand whether our disputes are vain or no, if we do but consider that we are either troubled about the present, the future, or both. If the present, it is easy to judge; and the future is uncertain. It is a foolish thing to be miserable beforehand, for fear of misery to come; for a man loses the present, which he might enjoy, in expectation of the future; nay, the fear of losing anything is as bad as the loss itself. I will be as prudent as I can, but not timorous or careless; and I will bethink myself, and forecast what inconveniences may happen before they come. It is true, a man may

fear and yet not be fearful, which is no more than to have the affection of fear without the vice of it, but yet a frequent admittance of it runs into a habit. It is a shameful and an unmanly thing to be doubtful, timorous, and uncertain—to set one step forward and another backward—and to be irresolute. Can there be any man so fearful that had not rather fall once than hang always in suspense ?

OUR MISERIES ARE ENDLESS IF WE FEAR ALL  
POSSIBILITIES.

Our miseries are endless, if we stand in fear of all possibilities: the best way in such a case is to drive out one nail with another, and a little to qualify Fear with Hope, which may serve to palliate a misfortune, though not to cure it. There is not anything that we fear which is so certain to come as it is certain that many things which we do fear will not come ; but we are loth to oppose our credulity when it begins to move us, and so to bring our fear to the test. Well ! but what if the thing we fear should come to pass ? Perhaps it will be the better for us. Suppose it to be death itself ;—why may it not prove the glory of my life ? Did not poison make Socrates famous ? and was not Cato's sword a great part of his honour ? Do we fear any misfortune to befall us ? We are not presently sure that it will happen. How many deliverances have come unlooked for ? and how many mischiefs that we looked for have never come to pass ? It is time enough to lament when it comes,



and, in the interim, to promise ourselves the best. What do I know, but something or other may delay or divert it? Some have escaped out of the fire;—others, when a house has fallen over their head, have received no hurt. One man has been saved when a sword was at his throat; another has been condemned, and outlived his headsman: so that ill fortune, we see, as well as good, has her levities. Peradventure it will be, peradventure not; and, until it comes to pass, we are not sure of it. We do, many times, take words in a worse sense than they were intended, and imagine things to be worse than they are. It is time enough to bear a misfortune when it comes, without anticipating it.

#### PREPARE FOR THE WORST.

He that would deliver himself from all apprehensions of the future, let him first take for granted that all fears will fall upon him, and then examine and measure the evil that he fears, which he will find to be neither great nor long. Beside that, the ills which he fears he may suffer, he suffers in the very fear of them. As, in the symptoms of an approaching disease, a man shall find himself lazy and listless, a weariness in his limbs, with a yawning and shuddering all over him; so it is in the case of a weak mind: it fancies misfortunes, and makes a man wretched before his time. Why should I torment myself at present with what perhaps may fall out fifty years hence? This humour is a kind of voluntary disease, and an industrious

contrivance of our own unhappiness to complain of an affliction that we do not feel. Some are not only moved with grief itself, but with the mere opinion of it, as children will start at a shadow, or at the sight of a deformed person. If we stand in fear of violence from a powerful enemy, it is some comfort to us that whosoever makes himself terrible to others is not without fear himself. The least noise makes a lion start, and the fiercest of beasts, whatsoever enrages them, makes them tremble too. A shadow, a voice, an unusual odour, rouses them.

THE THINGS MOST TO BE FEARED ARE WANT, SICKNESS,  
AND THE VIOLENCES OF MEN IN POWER.

The things most to be feared I take to be of three kinds—want, sickness, and those violences that may be imposed upon us by a strong hand. The last of these has the greatest force, because it comes attended with noise and tumult; whereas the incommodities of poverty and diseases are most natural, and steal upon us in silence, without any external circumstances of horror. But the other marches in pomp, with fire and sword, gibbets, racks, hooks, wild beasts to devour us, stakes to empale us, engines to tear us to pieces, pitched bags to burn us in, and a thousand other exquisite inventions of cruelty. No wonder, then, if that be most dreadful to us that presents itself in so many uncouth shapes, and by the very solemnity is rendered the more formidable. The more instruments of bodily pain the executioner shows us, the more

frightful he makes himself; for many a man that would have encountered death in any generous form, with resolution enough, is yet overcome with the manner of it. As for the calamities of hunger and thirst, agues, and scorching fevers, I look upon these miseries to be at least as grievous as any of the rest, only they do not so much affect the fancy, because they lie out of sight. Some people talk high of dangers at a distance, but (like cowards), when the executioner comes to do his duty, and shows us the fire, the axe, the scaffold, and death at hand, their courage fails them upon the very pinch, when they have most need of it. Sickness (I hope), captivity, fire, are no new things to us; the falls of houses, funerals, and conflagrations are every day before our eyes. The man that I supped with last night is dead before morning. Why should I wonder, then, seeing so many fall about me, to be hit at last myself? What can be greater madness than to cry out, Who would have dreamed of this? And why not, I beseech you? Where is that estate that may not be reduced to beggary?—that dignity which may not be followed with banishment, disgrace, and extreme contempt?—that kingdom that may not suddenly fall to ruin, change its master, and be depopulated?—that prince that may not pass the hand of a common hangman? That which is one man's fortune may be another's; but the foresight of calamities to come breaks the violence of them.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*It is according to the True or False Estimate of  
Things that we are Happy or Miserable.*



HOW many things are there that the fancy makes terrible by night, which by day are ridiculous? What is there in labour, or in death, that a man should be afraid of? They are much slighter in act than in contemplation, and we may contemn them, but we will not; so that it is not because they are hard that we dread them, but they are hard because we are first afraid of them. Pains, and other violences of fortune, are the same thing to us that goblins are to children—we are more scared with them than hurt. We take up our opinions upon trust, and err for company, still judging that to be best that has most competitors. We make a false calculation of matters, because we advise with opinion and not with nature; and this misleads us to a higher esteem for riches, honour, and power than they are worth. We have been used to admire and recommend them, and a private error is quickly turned into a public. The greatest and the smallest things are equally hard to be comprehended. We account many things great for want of understanding what effectually is so; and we reckon other things to be

small which we find frequently to be of the highest value. Vain things only move vain minds. The accidents that we so much dread are not terrible in themselves, but they are made so by our infirmities. But we consult rather what we hear than what we feel, without examining, opposing, or discussing the things we fear, so that we either stand still and tremble, or else directly run for it, as those troops did that, upon the raising of the dust, took a flock of sheep for the enemy. When the body and mind are corrupted, it is no wonder if all things prove intolerable; and not because they are so in truth, but because we are dissolute and foolish; for we are infatuated to such a degree, that, betwixt the common madness of men and that which falls under the care of the physician, there is but this difference—the one labours of a disease, and the other of a false opinion.

LET EVERY MAN MAKE THE BEST OF HIS LOT.

The Stoics hold that all those torments that commonly draw from us groans and ejaculations are in themselves trivial and contemptible. But these high-flown expressions apart (how true soever), let us discourse the point at the rate of ordinary men, and not make ourselves miserable before our time; for the things we apprehend to be at hand may possibly never come to pass. Some things trouble us more than they should, other things sooner, and some things, again, disorder us that ought not to trouble us at all, so that we either enlarge, or create,

or anticipate our disquiets. For the first part let it rest as a matter in controversy, for that which I account light another, perhaps, will judge insupportable. One man laughs under the lash, and another whines at a fillip. How sad a calamity is poverty to one man, which to another appears rather desirable than inconvenient ; for the poor man, who has nothing to lose, has nothing to fear, and he that would enjoy himself to the satisfaction of his soul must be either poor indeed, or, at least, what people think so. Some people are extremely dejected with sickness and pain ; whereas Epicurus blessed his fate with his last breath, in the acutest torments of disease. And so for banishment, which to one man is so grievous, and yet to another is no more than a bare change of place — a thing that we do every day for our health or pleasure ; nay, and upon the account even of common business. How terrible is death to one man, which to another appears the greatest providence in nature, even toward all ages and conditions ! It is the wish of some, the relief of many, and the end of all. It sets the slave at liberty, carries the banished man home, and places all mortals upon the same level : insomuch, that life itself were punishment without it. When I see tyrants, tortures, violences, the prospect of death is a consolation to me, and the only remedy against the injuries of life.

WE ARE VAIN AND WICKED, AND WILL NOT  
BELIEVE IT.

It is with us as with an innocent that my father had in his family: she fell blind on a sudden, and nobody could persuade her she was blind. She could not endure the house, she cried, it was so dark, and was always calling to go abroad. That which we laughed at in her we find to be true in ourselves: we are covetous and ambitious, but the world shall never bring us to acknowledge it, and we impute it to the place; nay, we are the worse of the two, for that blind fool called for a guide, and we wander about without one. It is a hard matter to cure those that will not believe they are sick. We are ashamed to admit a master, and we are too old to learn. Vice still goes before virtue, so that we have two works to do;—we must cast off the one and learn the other. By one evil we make way to another, and only seek things to be avoided, or those of which we are soon weary. That which seemed too much when we wished for it proves too little when we have it; and it is not, as some imagine, that we are insatiable, but it is little and narrow, and cannot satisfy us. That which we take to be very high at a distance we find to be but low when we come at it. And the business is, we do not understand the true state of things;—we are deceived by rumours. When we have gained the thing we aimed at, we find it to be either ill or empty, or, perchance, less than we expect, or otherwise, perhaps—great, but not good.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *The Blessings of Temperance and Moderation.*



HERE is not anything that is necessary to us, but we have it either cheap or gratis—and this is, the provision that our heavenly Father has made for us, whose bounty was never wanting to our needs. It is true the belly craves, and calls upon us, but then a small matter contents it; a little bread and water is sufficient, and all the rest is but superfluous. He that lives according to reason shall never be poor; and he that governs his life by opinion shall never be rich; for nature is limited, but fancy is boundless. As for meat, clothes, and lodging, a little feeds the body, and as little covers it: so that if mankind would only attend to human nature, without gaping at superfluities, a cook would be found as needless as a soldier, for we may have necessities upon very easy terms, whereas we put ourselves to great pains for excesses. Providence has been kinder to us than to leave us to live by our wits, and to stand in need of invention and arts. It is only pride and curiosity that involves us in difficulties. If nothing will serve a man but rich clothes and furniture, statues and plate, a numerous train of servants, and the rarities of all nations, it is



not fortune's fault, but his own, that he is not satisfied ; for his desires are insatiable, and this is not a thirst but a disease, and if he were master of the whole world he would be still a beggar. It is the mind that makes us rich and happy, in what condition soever we are, and money signifies no more to it than it does to the gods. If the religion be sincere, no matter for the ornaments. It is only luxury and avarice that makes poverty grievous to us, for it is a very small matter that does our business ; and when we have provided against cold, hunger, and thirst, all the rest is but vanity and excess. And there is no need of expense upon foreign delicacies, or the artifices of the kitchen. What is he the worse for poverty that despises these things. Nay, is he not rather the better for it, because he is not able to go to the price of them ? for he is kept sound whether he will or no, and that which a man cannot do looks many times as if he would not.

#### THE MODERATION OF PAST AGES.

When I look back into the moderation of past ages, it makes me ashamed to discourse, as if poverty had need of any consolation, for we are now come to that degree of intemperance that a fair patrimony is too little for a meal. Homer had but one servant, Plato three, and Zeno (the master of the masculine sect of Stoics) had none at all. The daughters of Scipio had their portions out of the common treasury, for their father left them not worth a penny. How happy

were their husbands that had the people of Rome for their father-in-law? Shall any man now condemn poverty after these eminent examples, which are sufficient not only to justify but to recommend it? Upon Diogenes's only servant running away from him, he was told where he was, and persuaded to fetch him back again. "What," says he; "can Manes live without Diogenes, and not Diogenes without Manes?" and so let him go. The piety and moderation of Scipio has made his memory more venerable than his arms, and more yet, after he left his country, than while he defended it, for matters were come to that pass that either Scipio must be injurious to Rome, or Rome to Scipio. Coarse bread and water to a temperate man are as good as a feast, and the very herbs of the field yield a nourishment to man as well as to beasts. It was not by choice meats and perfumes that our forefathers recommended themselves, but by virtuous actions, and the sweat of honest, military, and manly labours.

#### THE STATE OF INNOCENCE.

While nature lay in common, and all her benefits were promiscuously enjoyed, what could be happier than the state of mankind when people lived without avarice or envy? What could be richer than when there was not a poor man to be found in the world? So soon as this impartial bounty of Providence came to be restrained by covetousness, and that individuals appropriated that to themselves which was intended

for all, then did poverty creep into the world, when some men, by desiring more than they ought, deprived the rest of their share—a loss never to be repaired, for though we may come yet to get much, we once had all. The fruits of the earth were in those days divided among the inhabitants of it, without either want or excess. So long as men contented themselves with their lot there was no violence, no engrossing or hiding of those benefits for particular advantages which were appointed for the community, but every man had as much care for his neighbour as for himself—no arms, or bloodshed; no war, but with wild beasts: but, under the protection of a wood or a cave, they spent their days without cares, and their nights without groans. Their innocence was their security and their protection. There were as yet no beds of state, no ornaments of pearl or embroidery, nor any of those remorsees that attend them; but the heavens were their canopy, and the glories of them their spectacle. The motions of the orbs, the courses of the stars, and the wonderful order of Providence, was their contemplation. They had no palaces then like cities, but they had open air and breathing room—crystal fountains, refreshing shades, the meadows dressed up in their native beauty, and such houses as were afforded by nature, and wherein they lived contentedly, without fear either of loss or injury. These people lived without either solicitude or fraud. They had not as yet torn up the bowels of the earth for gold, silver, or precious stones; and, so far were they from killing any man, as we do, for a spectacle,

that they were not as yet come to it, either in fear or anger. It is the wonderful benignity of nature that has laid open to us all things that may do us good, and only hid those things from us that may hurt us—as if she durst not trust us with gold and silver, or with iron, which is the instrument of war and contention for another's. It is we ourselves that have drawn out of the earth both the causes and the instruments of our dangers, and we are so vain as to set the highest esteem upon those things to which nature has assigned the lowest place. What can be more coarse and rude in the mine than these precious metals, or more slavish and dirty than the people that dig and work them? And yet they defile our minds more than our bodies, and make the possessor fouler than the artificer of them. Rich men, in fine, are only the greater slaves—both the one and the other wants a great deal.

A TEMPERATE LIFE IS A HAPPY LIFE.

Happy is that man that eats only for hunger and drinks only for thirst, and lives by reason, not by example, and provides for use and necessity, not for ostentation and pomp. Let us curb our appetites, encourage virtue, and rather be beholden to ourselves for riches than to fortune, who, when a man draws himself into a narrow compass, has the less to aim at. Let my bed be plain and clean, and my clothes so too; my meat without much expense or many waiters, and neither a burthen to my

purse nor to my body. That which is too little for luxury is abundantly enough for nature ; the end of eating and drinking is satiety. Now, what matters it though one eats and drinks more, and another less, so long as the one is not a-hungry, nor the other a-thirst ? Epicurus, that limits pleasure to nature, as the Stoics do virtue, is undoubtedly in the right ; and those that cite him to authorise their voluptuousness do exceedingly mistake him, and only seek a good authority for an evil cause, for their pleasures of sloth, gluttony, and lust have no affinity at all with his precepts or meaning. It is true, that at first sight his philosophy seems effeminate ; but he that looks nearer him will find him to be a very brave man, only in a womanish dress.

LET PHILOSOPHERS LIVE AS THEY TEACH.

It is a common objection, I know, that these philosophers do not live at the rate they talk ; for they can flatter their superiors, gather estates, and be as much concerned at the loss of fortune or of friends as other people ; as sensible of reproaches, as luxurious in their eating and drinking, their furniture, their houses ; as magnificent in their plate, servants, and officers ; as profuse and curious in their gardens. Well ; and what of all this, or if it were twenty times more ? It is some degree of virtue for a man to condemn himself, and if he cannot come up to the best, to be yet better than the worst, and if he cannot wholly subdue his appetites, however, to check and diminish them. If I do

not live as I preach—take notice that I do not speak of myself, but of virtue; nor am I so much offended with other men's vices as with my own. All this was objected to Plato, Epicurus, Zeno; nor is any virtue so sacred as to escape malevolence. The cynic Demetrius was a great instance of severity and mortification, and one that imposed upon himself, neither to possess anything nor so much as to ask it; and yet he had this slur upon him, that his profession was poverty, not virtue. Plato is blamed for asking money; Aristotle, for receiving it; Democritus, for neglecting it; Epicurus, for consuming it. How happy were we, if we could but come to imitate these men's vices; for, if we knew our own condition, we should find work enough at home. But we are like people that are making merry at a play or a tavern, when their own houses are on fire, and yet they know nothing of it. Nay: Cato himself was said to be a drunkard; but drunkenness itself shall sooner be proved to be no crime than Cato dishonest. They that demolish temples, and overturn altars, show their ill-will, though they can do the gods no hurt; and so it fares with those that invade the reputation of great men. If the professors of virtue be as the world calls them—avaricious, libidinous, ambitious—what are they, then, that have a detestation for the very name of it? But malicious natures do not want wit to abuse honest men than themselves. It is the practice of the multitude to bark at eminent men, as little dogs do at strangers; for they look upon other men's virtues as the upbraiding of their own wickedness. We

should do well to commend those that are good. If not, let us pass them over ; but, however, let us spare our breath : for, beside the blaspheming of virtue, our rage is to no purpose. But to return now to my text.

IT IS GOOD TO PRACTICE FRUGALITY IN PLENTY.

We are ready enough to limit others, but loth to put bounds and restraint upon ourselves, though we know that many times a greater evil is cured by a less ; and the mind that will not be brought to virtue by precepts comes to it frequently by necessity. Let us try a little to dine poorly, to serve ourselves, to live within compass, and cut our coat according to our cloth. Occasional experiments of our moderation give us the best proof of our firmness and virtue. A well-governed appetite is a great part of liberty ; and it is a blessed lot that, since no man can have all things that he would have, we may all of us forbear desiring what we have not. It is the office of temperance to overrule us in our pleasures. Some she rejects ; others she qualifies and keeps within bounds. Oh ! the delights of rest, when a man comes to be weary, and of meat, when he is heartily hungry ! I have learned by one journey how many things we have that are superfluous, and how easily they may be spared ; for, when we are without them, upon necessity, we do not so much as feel the want of them. This is the second blessed day (says our author) that my friend and I have travelled together. One waggon carries ourselves,

and our servants ; my mattress lies upon the ground, and I upon that ; our diet answerable to our lodging, and never without our figs and our table books. The muleteer, without shoes, and the mules only, prove themselves to be alive by their walking. In this equipage I am not willing, I perceive, to own myself, but as often as we happen into better company, presently fall a-blushing, which shows that I am not yet confirmed in those things which I approve and commend—I am not yet come to own my frugality ; for he that is ashamed to be seen in a mean condition would be proud of a splendid one. I value myself upon what passengers think of me, and tacitly renounce my principles ; whereas I should rather lift up my voice to be heard by mankind, and tell them, You are all mad ; your minds are set upon superfluities, and you value no man for virtues. I came one night, weary, home, and threw myself upon the bed, with this consideration about me—there is nothing ill that is well taken. My baker tells me he has no bread ; but, says he, I may get some of your tenants, though, I fear, it is not good. “No matter,” said I, “for I will stay until it be better”—that is to say, until my stomach will be glad of worse. It is discretion, sometimes, to practise temperance, and accustom ourselves to a little ; for there are many difficulties, both of time and place, that may force us upon it. When we come to the matter of patrimony, how strictly do we examine what every man is worth before we will trust him with a penny ? Such a man, we cry, has a great estate, but it is shrewdly encumbered ; a very fair house, but



it was built with borrowed money ; a numerous family, but he does not keep touch with his creditors ; if his debts were paid, he would not be worth a groat. Why do we not take the same course in other things, and examine what every man is worth ? It is not enough to have a long train of attendants, vast possessions, or an incredible treasure in money and jewels. A man may be poor for all this. There is only this difference at best : one man borrows of the usurer, and the other of fortune. What signifies the carving or gilding of the chariot ? Is the master ever the better for it ?

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Constancy of Mind gives a Man Reputation, and makes him happy in despite of all Misfortune.*



THE whole duty of man may be reduced to the two points of abstinence and patience; —temperance in prosperity and courage in adversity. We have already treated of the former, and the other follows now in course.

### A WISE MAN IS ABOVE INJURIES.

An injury cannot be received without being done : but it may be done and yet not received ; as, a man may be in the water and not swim, but if he swims it is presumed that he is in the water. Or if a blow or a shot be levelled at us, it may so happen that a man may miss his aim, or some accident interpose that may divert the mischief. That which is hurt is passive and inferior to that which hurts it. But you will say that Socrates was condemned, and put to death, and so received an injury ; but I answer, that the tyrants did him an injury, and yet he received none. He that steals anything from me, and hides it in my own house, though I have not lost it, yet he has stolen it. Suppose a man gives me a draught of

poison, and it proves not strong enough to kill me ; his guilt is never the less for the disappointment. He that makes a pass at me is as much a murderer, though I put it by, as if he had struck me to the heart. It is the intention, not the effect, that makes the wickedness. He is a thief that has the will of killing and slaying before his hand is dipped in blood ; as it is sacrilege, the very intention of laying violent hands upon holy things. If a philosopher be exposed to torments, the axe over his head, and his body wounded, I will allow him to groan, for virtue itself cannot divest him of the nature of a man ; but if his mind stands firm, he has discharged his part. A great mind enables a man to maintain his station with honour, so that he only makes use of what he meets in his way, as a pilgrim that would fain be at his journey's end.

A GREAT MAN NEITHER ASKS ANYTHING, NOR WANTS  
ANYTHING.

It is the excellency of a great mind to ask nothing, and to want nothing, and to say, I'll have nothing to do with fortune that repulses Cato and prefers Vatinius. He that quits his hold, and accounts anything good that is not honest, runs gaping after vanities, spends his days in anxiety and vain expectation. That man is miserable. And yet it is hard, you will say, to be banished or cast into prison ; nay, what if it were to be burnt, or in any other way destroyed ? We have examples in all ages, and in all cases, of great men that have triumphed over all misfortunes.

Let us but consult history, and we shall find, even in the most effeminate of nations, and the most dissolute of times, men of all degrees, ages, and fortunes—nay, even women themselves—that have overcome the fear of death; which, in truth, is so little to be feared, that, duly considered, it is one of the greatest benefits in nature. People, I know, are very apt to pronounce upon other men's infirmities by the measure of their own, and to think it impossible that a man should be content to be burnt, wounded, killed, or shackled, though, in some cases, he may. It is only for a great mind to judge of great things; for, otherwise, that which is our infirmity will seem to be another body's—as a straight stick in the water appears to be crooked. He that yields, draws upon his own head his own ruin, for we are sure to get the better of fortune if we do but struggle with her. Fencers and wrestlers—we see what blows and bruises they endure, not only for honour, but for exercise. If we turn our backs once, we are routed and pursued. That man only is happy that draws good out of evil, that stands fast in his judgment, and unmoved by any external violence; or, however, so little moved, that the keenest arrow in the quiver of fortune is but as the prick of a needle to him rather than a wound. And all her other weapons fall upon him only as hail upon the roof of a house, that rattles and skips off again without any damage to the inhabitants.

THE GREATEST EVIL IN ADVERSITY IS THE  
SUBMISSION TO IT.

A generous and a clear-sighted young man will take it for happiness to encounter ill fortune. It is nothing for a man to hold up his head in a calm; but to maintain his post when all others have quitted their ground, and there to stand upright, where other men are beaten down—this is divine and praiseworthy! What ill is there in torments, or in those things which we commonly account grievous crosses? The great evil is the want of courage, the bowing and submitting to them—which can never happen to a wise man, for he stands upright under any weight. Nothing that is to be borne displeases him; he knows his strength, and, whatsoever may be any man's lot, he never complains if it be his own. Nature, he says, deceives nobody: she does not tell us whether our children shall be fair or foul, wise or foolish, good subjects or traitors, nor whether our fortune shall be good or bad. We must not judge of a man by his ornaments, but strip him of all the advantages and the impostures of fortune, nay, of his very body too, and look into his mind. If he can see a naked sword at his eyes without so much as winking; if he make it a thing indifferent to him whether his life go out at his throat or at his mouth; if he can hear himself sentenced to torments or exiles; and, under the very hand of the executioner, say thus to himself, "All this I am provided for, and it is no more than the part of a man that is to suffer the fate of humanity"—this is the

temper of mind that speaks a man happy, and without this all the confluences of external comforts signify no more than the personating of a king upon the stage; when the curtain is drawn, we are players again. Not that I pretend to exempt a wise man out of the number of men, as if he had no sense of pain, but I reckon him as compounded of body and soul. The body is irrational, and may be galled, burnt, tortured; but the rational part is fearless, invincible, and not to be shaken. This it is that I reckon upon as the supreme good of man, which, until it be perfected, is but an unsteady agitation of thought, and, in the perfection, an immovable stability. It is not in our contentions with fortune as in those of the theatre, where we may throw down our arms and pray for quarter. But here we must die, firm and resolute. Whatsoever is necessary we must bear patiently. It is no new thing to die, no new thing to mourn, and no new thing to be merry again. Must I be poor? I shall have company. In banishment? I will think myself born there. If I die, I shall be no more sick, and it is a thing I can do but once.

LET NO MAN BE SURPRISED WITH WHAT HE IS  
BORN TO.

Let us never wonder at anything we are born to, for no man has reason to complain where we are all in the same condition. He that escapes might have suffered, and it is but equal to submit to the law of mortality. We must undergo the colds of winter, the heats of

summer, the distempers of the air, and diseases of the body. A wild beast meets us in one place, and a man, that is more brutal, in another; we are here assaulted by fire—there by water. It is the part of a great mind to be temperate in prosperity, resolute in adversity, to despise what the vulgar admire, and to prefer a mediocrity to an excess. Was not Socrates oppressed with poverty, labour; nay, and the worst of wars in his own family—a fierce and turbulent woman to his wife? Were not his children indocible, and like their mother? After seven-and-twenty years spent in arms, he fell under the slavery to the thirty tyrants, and most of them his bitter enemies; he came at last to be sentenced as a violator of religion, a corrupter of youth, and a common enemy to God and man. After this he was imprisoned and put to death by poison, which was all so far from working upon his mind, that it never so much as altered his countenance. We are to bear ill accidents, as unkind seasons, distempers, or diseases; and why may we not reckon the actions of wicked men even among those accidents? Their deliberations are not counsels, but frauds, snares, and inordinate motions of the mind; and they are never without a thousand pretences and occasions of doing a man mischief. They have their informers, their pickets; they can make an interest with powerful men; and one may be robbed as well upon the bench as upon the highway. They lie in wait for advantages, and live in perpetual agitation, betwixt hope and fear; whereas he that is truly composed will stand all shocks, either of

violences, flatteries, or menaces, without perturbation. It is an inward fear that makes us curious after what we hear abroad.

THE WORKS OF FORTUNE ARE NEITHER GOOD  
NOR EVIL.

It is an error to attribute either good or ill to fortune, but the event itself we may ; and we ourselves are the occasion of it, being, in effect, the artificers of our own happiness or misery, for the mind is above fortune. If that be evil, it makes everything else so too. But if it be right and sincere, it corrects what is wrong, and mollifies what is hard, with modesty and courage. There is a great difference among those that the world calls wise men. Some take up private resolutions of opposing fortune, but they cannot go through with them, for they are either dazzled with splendour, on the one hand, or affrighted with terrors on the other ; but there are others that will close and grapple with fortune, and still come off victorious. But there are some, again, so delicate that they cannot so much as bear a scandalous report, which is the same thing as if a man should quarrel for being jostled in a crowd, or dashed against as he walks in the streets. He that has a great way to go must expect a slip—to stumble, and to be tired. To the luxurious man, frugality is a punishment ; labour and industry to the sluggard ; nay, study itself, is a torment to him. Not that these are hard to us by nature, but we ourselves are vain and irresolute ; nay, we wonder, many of us, how any



man can live without wine, or endure to rise so early in a morning.

VIRTUE IS GLORIOUS IN EXTREMITIES.

A brave man must expect to be tossed, for he is to steer his course in the teeth of fortune, and to work against wind and weather. In the suffering of torments, though there appears but one virtue, a man exercises many. That which is most eminent is patience (which is but a branch of fortitude); but there is prudence also in the choice of the action and in the bearing what we cannot avoid, and there is constancy in bearing it resolutely; and there is the same concurrence also of several virtues in other generous undertakings. When Leonidas was to carry his three hundred men into the straits of Thermopylæ, to put a stop to Xerxes's huge army—"Come, fellow-soldiers," says he, "eat your dinners here, as if you were to sup in another world;" and they answered his resolution. How plain and imperious was that short speech of Cæditius to his men upon a desperate action, and how glorious a mixture was there in it both of bravery and prudence? "Soldiers," says he, "it is necessary for us to go, but it is not necessary for us to return." This brief and pertinent harangue was worth ten thousand of the frivolous cavils and distinctions of the schools, which rather break the mind than fortify it, and when it is once perplexed and pricked with difficulties and scruples, there they leave it. Our passions are numerous and strong, and not to be

mastered with quirks and tricks, as if a man should undertake to defend the cause of God and man with a bulrush.

## VIRTUE IS INVINCIBLE.

Some are of opinion that death gives a man courage to support pain, and that pain fortifies a man against death ; but I say, rather, that a wise man depends upon himself against both, and that he does not either suffer with patience in hopes of death, or die willingly because he is weary of life, but he bears the one and waits for the other, and carries a divine mind through all the accidents of human life. He looks upon faith and honesty as the most sacred good of mankind, and neither to be forced by necessity nor corrupted by reward. Kill, burn, tear him in pieces, he will be true to his trust ; and the more any man labours to make him discover a secret, the deeper he will hide it. Resolution is the inexpugnable defence of human weakness, and it is a wonderful providence that attends it. Horatius Cocles\* opposed his single body to the whole army, until the bridge was cut down behind him, and then leaped into the river, with his sword in his hand, and came off safe to his party. He is the happy man that is the master of himself, and triumphs over the fear of death, which has overcome the conquerors of the world.

\* This Horatius the "One-Eyed," the hero of old Roman lays, is said to have defended the Sublician bridge with two companions against the whole Etruscan army under Porsenna, while the Romans broke down the bridge behind him. The story is familiar in Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Our Happiness depends in a great Measure upon the  
Choice of our Company.*



THE comfort of life depends upon conversation. Good offices and concord, and human society, is like the working of an arch of stone—all would fall to the ground if one piece did not support another. Above all things let us have a tenderness for blood ; and it is yet too little not to hurt, unless we profit one another. We are to relieve the distressed, to put the wanderer into his way, and to divide our bread with the hungry ; which is but the doing of good to ourselves, for we are only several members of one great body. Nay, we are all of a consanguinity, formed of the same materials, and designed to the same end. This obliges us to a mutual tenderness and converse ; and the other, to live with a regard to equity and justice. The love of society is natural, but the choice of our company is matter of virtue and prudence. Noble examples stir us up to noble actions, and the very history of large and public souls inspires a man with generous thoughts. It makes a man long to be in action, and doing of something, that the world may be the better

for ; as protecting the weak, delivering the oppressed, punishing the insolent. It is a great blessing the very consciousness of giving a good example ; beside that, it is the greatest obligation any man can lay upon the age he lives in. He that converses with the proud shall be puffed up ; a lustful acquaintance makes a man lascivious ; and the way to secure a man from wickedness is to withdraw from the examples of it. It is bad to have them near us, but worse to have them within us. Ill examples, pleasure, and ease are, no doubt of it, great corrupters of manners. A rocky ground hardens the horse's hoof ; the mountaineer makes the best soldier ; the miner makes the best pioneer ; and severity of discipline fortifies the mind. In all excesses, and extremities of good and of ill fortune, let us have recourse to great examples that have contemned both. Those are the best instructors that teach in their lives, and prove their words by their actions.

AVOID EVEN DISSOLUTE PLACES, AS WELL AS LOOSE  
COMPANIONS.

As an ill air may endanger a good constitution, so may a place of ill example endanger a good man. Nay, there are some places that have a kind of privilege to be licentious, and where luxury and dissolution of manners seem to be lawful, for great examples give both authority and excuse to wickedness. Those places are to be avoided as dangerous to our manners. Hannibal himself was unmanned by

the looseness of Campania, and though a conqueror by his arms, he was overcome by his pleasures. I would as soon live among butchers as among cooks—not but that a man may be temperate in any place; but to see drunken men staggering up and down everywhere, and only the spectacles of lust, luxury, and excess before our eyes, it is not safe to expose ourselves to the temptation. If the victorious Hannibal himself could not resist it, what shall become of us, then, that are subdued, and give ground to our lusts already? He\* that has to do with an enemy in his breast has a harder task upon him than he that is to encounter one in the field. His hazard is greater if he loses ground, and his duty is perpetual, for he has no place or time for rest. If I give way to pleasure, I must also yield to grief, to poverty, to labour, ambition, anger, until I am torn to pieces by my misfortunes and my lusts. But, against all this, philosophy propounds a liberty—that is to say, a liberty from the service of accidents and fortune. There is not anything that does more mischief to mankind than mercenary masters of philosophy that do not live as they preach; they give a scandal to virtue. How can any man expect that a ship should steer a fortunate course when the pilot lies wallowing in his own vomit. It is an usual thing first to learn to do ill ourselves, and then to instruct others to do so. But that man must needs be very

\* After the successful campaigning of 216 B.C., Hannibal retired to winter quarters at Capua, then celebrated for its wealth and luxury. The enervating effect of these upon his army is supposed to have contributed to its ultimate defeat.

wicked that has gathered into himself the wickedness of other people.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHERS ARE THE BEST COMPANY.

The best conversation is with the philosophers: that is to say, with such of them as teach us matter, not words; that preach to us things necessary, and keep us to the practice of them. There can be no peace in human life without the contempt of all events. There is nothing that either puts better thoughts into a man, or sooner sets him right that is out of the way, than a good companion; for the example has the force of a precept, and touches the heart with an impulse to goodness. And not only the frequent hearing and seeing of a wise man delights us, but the very encounter of him suggests profitable contemplations, such as a man finds himself moved with when he goes into a holy place. I will take more care with whom I eat and drink than what, for without a friend the table is a manger. Writing does well, but personal discourse and conversation does better; for men give great credit to their ears, and take stronger impressions from example than precept.

THE MORE COMPANY, THE MORE DANGER.

Now, though it be by instinct that we covet society, and avoid solitude, we should yet take this along with us—that the more acquaintance the more danger; nay, there is not one man of an

hundred that is to be trusted with himself. If company cannot alter us it may interrupt us, and he that so much as stops upon the way loses a great deal of a short life, which we yet make shorter by our inconstancy. If an enemy were at our heels, what haste should we make? But death is so, and yet we never mind it. There should be no venturing of tender and easy natures among the people, for it is odds that they will go over to the major party. It would, perhaps, shake the constancy of any of us, even when our resolutions are at the height to stand the shock of vice that presses upon us with a kind of public authority. It is a world of mischief that may be done by one single example of avarice and luxury. One voluptuous palate makes a great many. A wealthy neighbour stirs up envy, and a gibing companion moves ill nature wherever he comes. What will become of those people, then, that expose themselves to a popular violence?—which is ill both ways, either if they comply with the wicked, because they are many, or quarrel with the multitude, because they are not principled alike? The best way is to retire, and associate only with those that may be the better for us, and we for them. These respects are mutual, for while we teach, we learn. To deal freely, I dare not trust myself in the hands of much company. I never go abroad that I come home again the same man I went out; something or other that I had put in order is discomposed; some passion that I had subdued gets head again; and it is just with our minds as it is after a long indisposition with our bodies—we are grown so tender that

the least breath of air exposes us to a relapse; and it is no wonder if a large acquaintance be dangerous where there is scarce any single man but, by his discourse, example, or behaviour, does either recommend to us, or imprint in us, or, by a kind of contagion, insensibly infect us with one vice or other; and the more people the greater is the peril. Especially let us have a care of public spectacles, where wickedness insinuates itself with pleasure; and above all others, let us avoid spectacles of cruelty and blood, and have nothing to do with those that are perpetually whining and complaining. There may be faith and kindness there, but no peace. People that are distraught, we do, commonly, for their own sakes, set a guard upon them, for fear they should make an ill use of being alone; especially the imprudent, who are still contriving of mischief, either for others or for themselves, in cherishing their lusts, or forming their designs. So much for the choice of a companion; we shall now proceed to that of a friend.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *The Blessings of Friendship.*



Of all felicities, the most charming is that of a firm and gentle friendship. It sweetens all our cares, dispels our sorrows, and counsels us in all extremities. Nay, if there were no other comfort in it than the bare exercise of so generous a virtue, even for that single reason a man would not be without it; besides that, it is a sovereign antidote against all calamities—even against the fear of death itself.

But we are not yet to number our friends by the visits that are made us, and to confound the decencies of ceremony and commerce with the offices of united affections.

### THE CHOICE OF A FRIEND.

The great difficulty rests in the choice of him; that is to say, in the first place, let him be virtuous, for vice is contagious, and there is no trusting of the sound and the sick together. And he ought to be a wise man too, if a body knew where to find him. But, in this case, he that is least ill is best, and the highest degree of human prudence is only the most

venial folly. That friendship, where men's affections are cemented by an equal and by a common love of goodness, it is not either hope, or fear, or any private interest that can ever dissolve it, but we carry it with us to our graves, and lay down our lives for it with satisfaction. Paulina's\* good, and mine, says our author, were so wrapped up together, that in consulting her comfort, I provided for my own; and when I could not prevail upon her to take less care for me, she prevailed upon me to take more care of myself. Some people make it a question whether it is the greater delight, the enjoyment of an old friendship or the acquiring of a new one; but it is in the preparing of a friendship, and in the possession of it, as it is with a husbandman in sowing and reaping. His delight is the hope of his labour in the one case, and the fruit of it in the other. My conversation lies among my books, but yet in the letters of a friend methinks I have his company; and when I answer them I do not only write, but speak. And in effect a friend is an eye, a heart, a tongue, a hand, at all distances. When friends see one another personally they do not see one another as they do when they are divided, where the distance dignifies the prospect; but they are effectually in a great measure absent, even when they are present. Consider their nights apart, their private studies, their separate employments, and necessary visits, and they are almost as much together divided as present. True friends are the whole world to one another, and he that is a friend to himself is a

\* Seneca's wife.

friend to mankind. Even in my studies, the greatest delight I take in what I learn is the teaching of it to others; for there is no relish, methinks, in the possessing of anything without a partner; nay, if wisdom itself were offered me upon condition only of keeping it to myself, I should undoubtedly refuse it.

THERE MUST BE NO RESERVES IN FRIENDSHIPS.

There must be no reserves in friendship: as much deliberation as you please before the league is struck, but no doubtings or jealousies after. It is a preposterous weakness to love a man before we know him, and not to care for him after. It requires time to consider of a friendship, but, the resolution once taken entitles him to my very heart. I look upon my thoughts to be as safe in his breast as in my own; I shall, without any scruple, make him the confidant of my most secret cares and counsels. It goes a great way toward the making of a man faithful, to let him understand that you think him so; and he that does but so much as suspect that I will deceive him, gives me a kind of right to cozen him. When I am with my friend, methinks I am alone, and as much at liberty to speak anything as to think it; and as our hearts are one, so must be our interests and convenience; for friendship lays all things in common, and nothing can be good to the one that is ill to the other. I do not speak of such a community as to destroy one another's individual rights, but as the father and the mother have a common interest in all their children.

## A GENEROUS FRIENDSHIP.

But let us have a care, above all things, that our kindness be rightfully founded, for where there is any other invitation to friendship itself, that friendship will be bought and sold. He derogates from the majesty of it that makes it only dependent on good fortune. It is a narrow consideration for a man to please himself in the thought of a friend, because, says he, I shall have one to help me when I am sick, in prison, or in want. A brave man should rather take delight in the contemplation of doing the same offices for another. He that loves a man for his own sake is in an error. A friendship of interest cannot last any longer than the interest itself ; and this is the reason that men in prosperity are so much followed ; and when a man goes down the wind nobody comes near him. Temporary friends will never stand the test. One man is forsaken for fear or profit, another is betrayed. It is a negotiation, not a friendship, that has an eye to advantages. Only through the corruption of times, that which was formerly a friendship is now become a design upon a booty. Alter your testament and you lose a friend. But my end of friendship is to have one dearer to me than myself, and for the saving of whose life I would cheerfully lay down my own ; taking this along with me, that only wise men can be friends, others are but companions, and that there is a great difference also betwixt love and friendship. The one may sometime do us hurt, the other always does us good, for one friend is helpful to

another in all cases, as well in prosperity as affliction. We receive comfort even at a distance from those we love, but then it is light and faint ; whereas presence and conversation touches us to the quick, especially if we find the man we love to be such a person as we wish.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*He that would be Happy must take an Account  
of his Time.*



IN the distribution of human life, we find that a great part of it passes away in evil-doing, a greater yet in doing just nothing at all, and, in effect, the whole in doing things beside our business. Some hours we bestow upon ceremony and servile attendances, some upon our pleasures, and the remainder runs at waste. What a deal of time is it that we spend in hopes and fears, love and revenge, in balls, treats, making of interests, suing for offices, soliciting of causes, and slavish flatteries! The shortness of life, I know, is the common complaint both of fools and philosophers, as if the time we have were not sufficient for our duties. But it is with our lives as with our estates—a good husband makes a little go a great way; whereas let the revenue of a prince fall into the hand of a prodigal, it is gone in a moment. So that the time allotted us, if it were well employed, were abundantly enough to answer all the ends and purposes of mankind; but we squander it away in avarice, drink, sleep, luxury, ambition, fawning addresses, envy, rambling voyages, impertinent

studies, change of councils, and the like ; and when our portion is spent, we find the want of it, though we give no heed to it in the passage, insomuch that we have rather made our life short than found it so. You shall have some people perpetually playing with their fingers, whistling, humming, and talking to themselves ; and others consume their days in the composing, hearing, or reciting of songs and lampoons. How many precious mornings do we spend in consultation with barbers, tailors, and tire-women, patching and painting betwixt the comb and the glass ? A council must be called upon every hair we cut, and one curl amiss is as much as a body's life is worth. The truth is, we are more solicitous about our dress than our manners, and about the order of our periwigs than that of the government. At this rate let us but discount, out of a life of a hundred years, that time which has been spent upon popular negotiations, frivolous amours, domestic brawls, saunterings up and down to no purpose, diseases that we have brought upon ourselves ; and this large extent of life will not amount, perhaps, to the minority of another man. It is a long being, but perchance a short life. And what is the reason of all this ? We live as if we should never die, and without any thought of human frailty ; when yet the very moment we bestow upon this man or thing may peradventure be our last. But the greatest loss of time is delay and expectation, which depends on the future. We let go the present, which we have in our own power ; we look forward to that which depends upon fortune, and so quit a

certainty for an uncertainty. We should do by time as we do by a torrent—make use of it while we may have it, for it will not last always.

WE TAKE MORE CARE OF OUR FORTUNES THAN  
OF OUR LIVES.

The wit of man is not able to express the blindness of human folly, in taking so much more care of our fortunes, our houses, and our money than we do of our lives; everybody breaks in upon the one gratis, but we betake ourselves to fire and sword if any man invades the other. There is no dividing in the case of patrimony, but people share our time with us at pleasure, so profuse are we of that only thing whereof we may be honestly covetous. It is a common practice to ask an hour or two of a friend for such or such a business, and it is as easily granted, both parties only considering the occasion and not the thing itself. They never put time to account, which is the most valuable of all precious things; but because they do not see it, they reckon upon it as nothing. Our time is set, and day and night we travel on; there is no baiting by the way, and it is not in the power of either prince or people to prolong it. No man takes care to live well, but long; when yet it is in everybody's power to do the former, and in no man's to do the latter. We consume our lives in providing the very instruments of life, and govern ourselves still with a regard to the future, so that we do not properly live, but we are about to live.



## TIME PRESENT, PAST, AND TO COME.

In the division of life there is time present, past, and to come. What we do is short ; what we shall do is doubtful ; but what we have done is certain, and out of the power of fortune. The passage of time is wonderfully quick, and a man must look backward to see it ; and in that retrospect he has all past ages at a view. But the present gives us the slip unperceived. It is but a moment that we live, and yet we are dividing it into childhood, youth, man's estate, and old age, all which degrees we bring into that narrow compass. If we do not watch, we lose our opportunities ; if we do not make haste, we are left behind ; our best hours escape us, the worst are to come. The purest part of our life runs first, and leaves only the dregs at the bottom ; and that time which is good for nothing else we dedicate to virtue, and only propound to begin to live at an age that very few people arrive at. What greater folly can there be in the world than this loss of time, the future being so uncertain, and the damages so irreparable ?

## WE CAN CALL NOTHING OUR OWN BUT OUR TIME.

There is nothing that we can properly call our own but our time, and yet everybody fools us out of it that has a mind to it. If a man borrows a paltry sum of money there must be bonds and securities, and every common civility is presently charged upon account ; but he that has my time thinks he owes

me nothing for it, though it be a debt that gratitude itself can never repay. I cannot call any man poor that has enough still left, be it never so little. It is good advice yet to those that have the world before them, to play the good husband betimes, for it is too late to spare at the bottom when all is drawn out to the lees. He that takes away a day from me takes away what he can never restore me. But our time is either forced away from us, or stolen from us, or lost; of which the last is the foulest miscarriage. It is in life as in a journey; a book or a companion brings us to our lodging before we thought we were half-way. Upon the whole matter we consume our time, one upon another, without any regard at all to our own improvement. I do not speak of such as live in notorious scandal, but even those men themselves whom the world pronounces happy are smothered in their felicities—servants to their professions and clients, and drowned in their lusts. We are apt to complain of the haughtiness of great men, when yet there is hardly any of them all so proud but that at some time or other a man may yet have access to him, and perhaps a good word or look into the bargain. Why do we not rather complain of ourselves for being of all others, even to ourselves, the most deaf and inaccessible?

COMPANY AND BUSINESS ARE GREAT DEVOURERS  
OF TIME.

Company and business are great devourers of time, and our vices destroy our lives as well as our fortunes.

The present is but a moment, and perpetually in flux ; the time past we call to mind when we please, and it will abide the examination and inspection. But the busy man has not leisure to look back, or if he has, it is an unpleasant thing to reflect upon a life to be repented of ; whereas the conscience of a good life puts a man into a secure and perpetual possession of a felicity never to be disturbed or taken away ; but he that has led a wicked life is afraid of his own memory, and in the review of himself he finds only appetite, avarice, or ambition, instead of virtue. But still, he that is not at leisure many times to live, must, when his fate comes, whether he will or no, be at leisure to die. Alas ! what is time to eternity ? the age of a man to the age of the world ? and how much of this little do we spend in fears, anxieties, tears, childhood ? Nay, we sleep away the one half. How great a part of it runs away in luxury and excess, the ranging of our guests, our servants, and our dishes, as if we were to eat and drink, not for satiety, but ambition. The nights may well seem short that are so dear bought, and bestowed upon wine and pleasure. The day is lost in expectation of the night, and the night in the apprehension of the morning. There is a terror in our very pleasures, and this vexatious thought in the very height of them, that they will not last always, which is a canker in the delights even of the greatest and the most fortunate of men.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Happy is the Man that may choose his own Business.*



H! the blessings of privacy and leisure! the wish of the powerful and eminent, but the privilege only of inferiors, who are the only people that live to themselves. Nay, the very thought and hope of it is a consolation, even in the middle of all the tumults and hazards that attend greatness. The Emperor Augustus prayed that he might live to retire, and deliver himself from public business; his discourses were still pointing that way, and the highest felicity which this mighty prince had in prospect was the divesting himself of that illustrious state, which, how glorious soever in show, had at the bottom of it only anxiety and care. But it is one thing to retire for pleasure, and another thing for virtue, which must be active, even in that retreat, and give proof of what it has learned; for a good and a wise man does in privacy consult the well-being of posterity. Philosophers have done greater things in their studies than if they had led armies, borne offices, or given laws, which, in truth, they have done, not to one city alone, but to all mankind. Their quiet has contributed more to the common benefit than the sweat and

labour of other people. That retreat is not worth the while which does not afford a man greater and nobler work than business. There is no slavish attendance upon great officers; no canvassing for places, no making of parties; no disappointments in my pretension to this charge, to that regiment, or to such or such a title; no envy of any man's favour or fortune: but a calm enjoyment of the general bounties of Providence, in company with a good conscience. A wise man is never so busy as in the solitary contemplation of God and the works of nature. He withdraws himself to attend the service of future ages; and those counsels which he finds salutary to himself he commits to writing, for the good of after-times, as we do the receipts of sovereign antidotes or balsams. He that is well employed in his study, though he may seem to do nothing at all, does the greatest things yet of all others in affairs both human and divine. To supply a friend with a sum of money, or give my voice for an office, these are only private and particular obligations; but he that lays down precepts for the governing of our lives, and the moderating of our passions, obliges human nature, not only in the present, but in all succeeding generations.

LIBERTY IS TO BE PURCHASED AT ANY RATE.

But how shall I get myself at liberty? We can run any hazards for money, take any pains for honour, and why do we not venture something also for leisure and freedom? without which we must

expect to live and die in a tumult ; for, so long as we live in public, business breaks in upon us, as one billow drives on another, and there is no avoiding it with either modesty or quiet. It is a kind of whirlpool that sucks a man in, and he can never disengage himself. A man of business cannot in truth be said to live, and not one of a thousand understands how to do it. As a life of care is always a miserable life, so is it the greatest of all miseries to be perpetually employed upon other people's business ; for to sleep, to eat, to drink at their hours, to walk their pace, and to love and hate as they do, is the vilest of servitudes. Now, though business must be quitted, let it not be done unseasonably : the longer we defer it the more we endanger our liberty, and yet we must no more fly before the time than linger when the time comes. Many people, I know, seek business merely as employment, and they are even weary of their lives without it, for want of entertainment in their own thoughts. The hours are long and hateful to them when they are alone. When they give over other people's business they do their own, and pretend business, when they make it, and value themselves upon being thought men of employment. Liberty is the thing which they are perpetually a-wishing, and never come to obtain : a thing neither to be bought nor sold ; but a man must ask it of himself, and give it to himself. He that has given proof of his virtue in public should do well to make trial of it in private also.

## SEVERAL PEOPLE WITHDRAW FOR SEVERAL ENDS.

He that has lived at sea in a storm, let him retire and die in the haven; but let his retreat be without ostentation, and wherein he may enjoy himself with a good conscience, without the want, the fear, the hatred, or the desire of anything—not out of a malevolent detestation of mankind, but for satisfaction and repose. He that shuns both business and men, either out of envy or any other discontent, he retreats but to the life of a mole; nor does he live to himself, as a wise man does, but to his bed, his belly, and his lusts. Many people seem to retire out of a weariness of public affairs, and the trouble of disappointments; and yet ambition finds them out even in that recess into which fear and weariness had cast them, and so does luxury, pride, and most of the distempers of a public life. There are many that lie close, not that they may live securely, but that they may transgress more privately. A philosopher once saw a young man walking by himself;—"Have a care," says he, "of lewd company." Some men are busy in idleness, and make peace more laborious and troublesome than war; nay, and more wicked too, when they bestow it upon such lusts and other vices, which even the license of a military life would not endure. We cannot call these people men of leisure that are wholly taken up with their pleasures. A troublesome life is much to be preferred before a slothful one; and it is a strange thing, methinks, that any man should fear death that has buried himself alive, as

privacy without learning is but the burying of a man quick.

SOME MEN RETIRE TO BE TALKED OF.

There are some that make a boast of their retreat, which is but a kind of lazy ambition ; they retire to make people talk of them, whereas I would rather withdraw to speak with myself. And what shall that be, but that which we are apt to speak of one another ? I will speak ill of myself ; I will examine, accuse, and punish my infirmities. I have no design to be cried up for a great man that has renounced the world in a contempt of the vanity and madness of human life ; I blame nobody but myself, and I address only to myself. He that comes to me for help is mistaken, for I am not a physician but a patient ; and I shall be well enough content to have it said, when any man leaves me, I took him for a happy and a learned man, and truly I find no such matter. I had rather have my retreat pardoned than envied. There are some creatures that confuse their tracks about their dens that they may not be found out, and so should a wise man in the case of his retirement. When the door is open the thief passes it by as not worth his while ; but when it is bolted and sealed, it is a temptation for people to be prying. To have it said that such a one is never out of his study and sees nobody, etc., this furnishes matter for discourse. He that makes his retirement too strict and severe does as good as call company to take notice of it.



## PHILOSOPHY REQUIRES PRIVACY AND FREEDOM.

Every man knows his own constitution. One pinches his stomach, another supports it with good nourishment. He that shows a gouty foot, a lame hand, or contracted nerves, shall be permitted to lie still and attend his cure. And why not so in the vices of his mind? We must discharge all impediments, and make way for philosophy as a study inconsistent with common business. To all other things we must deny ourselves openly and frankly: when we are sick we refuse visits, keep ourselves close, and lay aside all public cares; and shall we not do as much when we philosophise? Business is the drudgery of the world, and only fit for slaves, but contemplation is the work of wise men. Not but that solitude and company may be allowed to take their turns: the one creates in us the love of mankind, the other that of ourselves; solitude relieves us when we are sick of company, and conversation when we are weary of being alone; so that the one cures the other. There is no man, in fine, so miserable as he that is at a loss how to spend his time. He is restless in his thoughts, unsteady in his counsels, dissatisfied with the present, solicitous for the future; whereas he that prudently computes his hours and his business does not only fortify himself against the common accidents of life, but improves the most rigorous dispensations of providence to his comfort, and stands firm under all the trials of human weakness.

## CHAPTER XXL

*The Contempt of Death makes all the Miseries of Life easy to us.*



It is a hard task to master the natural desire of life by a philosophical contempt of death, and to convince the world that there is no hurt in it, and crush an opinion that was brought up with us from our cradles. What shall we say to human frailty, to carry it fearless through the fury of flames, and upon the points of swords? What rhetoric shall we use to bear down the universal consent of people to so dangerous an error? The captious and superfine subtleties of the schools will never do the work. These speak many things sharp, but void of effect. It is not that I propound the making of death so indifferent to us, as it is whether a man's hairs be even or odd; for what with an implanted desire in everything of preserving itself, and a long acquaintance betwixt the soul and body, death may carry an appearance of evil, though in truth it is itself no evil at all. Beside that, we are to go to a strange place in the dark, and under great uncertainties of our future state; so that people die in terror, because they do not know whither they are

to go, and they are apt to fancy the worst of what they do not understand.

IT IS A FOLLY TO FEAR DEATH.

But what is it we fear? Oh! it is a terrible thing to die. Well! and is it not better once to suffer it than always to fear it? The earth itself suffers both with me and before me. How many islands are swallowed up in the sea? How many towns do we sail over? Nay, how many nations are wholly lost, either by inundations or earthquakes? And shall I be afraid of my little body? Why should I, that am sure to die, and that all other things are mortal, be fearful of coming to my last gasp myself? Die we must, but when? What is that to us? It is the law of nature, the tribute of mortals, and the remedy of all evils. It is only the disguise that affrights us, as children that are terrified with a mask. Take away the pomp and circumstances that accompany it, and death is no more than what my slave yesterday contemned: the pain is nothing to the tortures of disease; if it be tolerable it is not great, and if intolerable it cannot last long. There is nothing that nature has made necessary which is more easy than death. We are longer a-coming into the world than going out of it. It is but a moment's work the parting of the soul and body. What a shame is it, then, to stand in fear of anything so long that is over so soon?

## THE FEAR OF DEATH IS EASILY OVERCOME.

Nor is it any great matter to overcome this fear ; for we have examples, as well of the meanest of men as of the greatest, that have done it. There was a man condemned to die in the arena, who, in disdain, thrust a stick down his own throat and choked himself ; and another, on the same occasion, pretending to nod upon the chariot as if he were asleep, cast his head betwixt the spokes of the wheel, and kept his seat till his neck was broken. The most timorous of creatures, when they see there is no escaping, oppose themselves to all dangers ; the despair gives them courage, and the necessity overcomes the fear. If it shall please God to add another day to our lives, let us thankfully receive it ; but, however, it is our happiest and securest course so to compose ourselves to-night that we may have no anxious dependence upon to-morrow. He that can say, I have lived this day, makes the next clear again.

## HE THAT DESPISES DEATH FEARS NOTHING.

Death is the worst that either the severity of laws or the cruelty of tyrants can impose upon us, and it is the utmost extent of the dominion of fortune. He that is fortified against that must consequently be superior to all other difficulties that are but in the way to it. Nay, and on some occasions, it requires more courage to live than to die. He that is not prepared for death shall be perpetually troubled, as

well with vain apprehensions as with real dangers. When the mind is under a consternation, there is no state of life that can please us ; for we do not so much endeavour to avoid mischiefs as to run away from them ; and the greatest slaughter is upon a flying enemy. Had not a man better breathe out his last once for all than lie agonising in pains, dying by inches, losing of his blood by drops ; and yet how many are there that are ready to betray their country and their friends, and to sell their very wives and daughters, to preserve a miserable carcase ? Madmen and children have no apprehension of death, and it were a shame that our reason should not do as much toward our security as their folly. But the great matter is to die considerately and cheerfully, with the support of virtue ; for life, in itself, is irksome, and only eating and drinking in a circle.

#### ALL MEN MUST DIE.

How many are there that, betwixt the apprehensions of death and the miseries of life, are at their wits' end what to do with themselves ? Wherefore, let us fortify ourselves against those calamities, from which the prince is no more exempt than the beggar. Never was any man so great but he was as liable to suffer mischief as he was able to do it. It is the fear of our last hour that disquiets all the rest. By the justice of all constitutions mankind is condemned to a capital punishment. Now, how despicable would that man appear, who, being sentenced to death, in

common with the whole world, should only petition that he might be the last man brought to the block? Life is a small matter; but it is a matter of importance to condemn it. Nature, that begat us, expels us, and a better and safer place is provided for us. And what is death but a ceasing to be what we were before? We are kindled and put out; to cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same thing. We die daily; and while we are growing, our life decreases; every moment that passes takes away part of it; all that is past is lost; nay, we divide with death the very instant that we live. As the last sand in the glass does not measure the hour, but finishes it; so the last moment that we live does not make up death, but concludes. There are some that pray more earnestly for death than we do for life; but it is better to receive it cheerfully when it comes than to hasten it before the time.

#### TO WHAT END SHOULD WE COVET LIFE?

But what is it that we live any longer for? Not for our pleasures, for those we have tasted over and over, even to satiety, so that there is no point of luxury that is new to us; but a man would be loth to leave his country and his friends behind him. That is to say, he would have them go first; for that is surely all it implies. Well! but I would fain live to do more good, and discharge myself in the offices of life; as if to die were not the duty of every man that lives. We are loth to leave our possessions;

and no man swims well with his luggage. We are all of us equally fearful of death and ignorant of life; but what can be more shameful than to be solicitous upon the brink of security? If death be at any time to be feared, it is always to be feared; but the way never to fear it is to be often thinking of it. To what end is it to put off, for a little while, that which we cannot avoid? He that dies does but follow him that is dead. Why are we, then, so long afraid of that which is so little a while a-doing? How miserable are those people that spend their lives in the dismal apprehensions of death! for they are beset on all hands, and every minute in dread of a surprise. We must therefore look about us as if we were in an enemy's country, and consider our last hour not as a punishment, but as the law of nature; the fear of it is a continual palpitation of the heart, and he that overcomes that terror shall never be troubled with any other. Life is a navigation; we are perpetually wallowing and dashing one against another; sometimes we suffer shipwreck, but we are always in danger, and in expectation of it. And what is it when it comes, but either the end of a journey or a passage? It is as great a folly to fear death as to fear old age, nay, as to fear life itself; for he that would not die ought not to live, since death is the condition of life. Beside that, it is a madness to fear a thing that is certain; for where there is no doubt there is no place for fear.

## TO DIE IS TO OBEY NATURE.

We are still chiding of fate, and even those that exact the most rigorous justice betwixt man and man are yet themselves unjust to providence. Why was such a one taken away in the prime of his years? as if it were the number of years that makes death easy to us, and not the temper of the mind. He that would live a little longer to-day would be as loth to die a hundred years hence. But which is more reasonable for us to obey nature, or for nature to obey us? Go we must at last, and no matter how soon. It is the work of fate to make us live long, but it is the business of virtue to make a short life sufficient. Life is to be measured by action, not by time: a man may die old at thirty, and young at fourscore; nay, the one lives after death, and the other perished before he died. I look upon age among the effects of chance. How long I shall live is in the power of others, but it is in my own how well. The largest space of time is to live until a man is wise. He that dies of old age does no more than go to bed when he is weary. Death is the test of life, and it is that only which discovers what we are, and distinguishes betwixt ostentation and virtue. A man may dispute, cite great authorities, talk learnedly, and yet be rotten at heart. But let us soberly attend our business; and since it is uncertain when or where we shall die, let us look for death in all places, and at all times. We can never study that point too much, which we can never come to experiment, whether we know it or no. It is



a blessed thing to dispatch the business of life before we die, and then to expect death in the possession of a happy life. He is the great man that is willing to die when his life is pleasant to him. An honest life is not a greater good than an honest death. How many brave young men, by an instinct of nature, are carried on to great actions, and even to the contempt of all hazards?

#### IT IS CHILDISH TO DIE LAMENTING.

It is childish to go out of the world groaning and wailing, as we came into it. Our bodies must perish, as being only the covering of the soul. We shall then discover the secrets of nature: the darkness shall be dispersed, and our souls irradiated with light and glory—a glory without a shadow; a glory that shall surround us, and from whence we shall look down and see day and night beneath us. If we cannot lift up our eyes toward the lamp of heaven without dazzling, what shall we do when we come to behold the divine light in its illustrious original? That death which we so much dread, and decline, is not a termination, but the intermission of a life which will return again. All those things that are the very cause of life, are the way to death. We fear it as we do infamy; but it is a great folly to fear words. Some people are so impatient of life that they are ever wishing for death; but he that wishes to die does not desire it. Let us rather wait God's pleasure, and pray for health and life. If we have a mind to live, why do we wish to

die ? If we have a mind to die, we may do it without talking of it. Men are a great deal more resolute in the article of death itself than they are about the circumstances of it. For it gives a man courage to consider that his fate is inevitable ; the slow approaches of death are the most troublesome to us, as we see many a gladiator who, being wounded, will direct his adversary's weapon to his very heart, though but timorous, perhaps, in the combat. There are some that have not the heart either to live or die. That is a sad case. But this we are sure of : the fear of death is a continual slavery, as the contempt of it is certain liberty.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *Consolations against Death, from the Providence and the Necessity of it.*



THIS life is only a prelude to eternity, where we are to expect a new life, and another state of things. We have no prospect of heaven here, but at a distance: let us therefore expect our last and appointed hour with courage. The last (I say) to our bodies, but not to our minds. Our luggage we must leave behind us, and return as naked out of the world as we came to it. The day which we fear as our last is but the birthday of our eternity, and it is the only way to it, so that what we fear as a rock proves to be but a port—in many cases to be desired, never to be refused; and he that dies young has only made a quick voyage of it. It is a great providence that we have more ways out of the world than we have into it. Our security stands upon a point, the very article of death. It draws a great many blessings into a very narrow compass. To suffer death is but the law of nature, and it is a great comfort that it can be done but once. In the very convulsions of it we have this consolation, that our pain is near an end, and that it frees us from all the

miseries of life. What it is we know not, and it were rash to condemn what we do not understand; but this we presume, either that we shall pass out of this into a better life, where we shall live with tranquillity and splendour in diviner mansions, or else return to our first principles, free from the sense of any inconvenience. Death is as much a debt as money, and life is but a journey towards it. Some dispatch it sooner, others later, but we must all have the same period. A great soul takes no delight in staying with the body; it considers whence it came, and knows whither it is to go. The day will come that shall separate this mixture of soul and body, of divine and human. My body I will leave where I found it; my soul I will restore to Heaven, which would have been there already, but for the clog that keeps it down. And beside, how many men have been the worse for longer living, that might have died with reputation if they had been sooner taken away? how many disappointments of hopeful youths that have proved dissolute men? over and above the ruins, shipwrecks, torments, prisons that attend long life—a blessing so deceitful, that if a child were in condition to judge of it, and at liberty to refuse it, he would not take it.

WHAT GOD HAS MADE NECESSARY MAN SHOULD  
COMPLY WITH CHEERFULLY.

What providence has made necessary human prudence should comply with cheerfully. As there is a necessity of death, so that necessity is equal and

invincible. No man has cause of complaint for that which every man must suffer as well as himself. When we should die we will not, and when we would not we must ; but our fate is fixed, and unavoidable is the decree. Why do we, then, stand trembling when the time comes ? Why do we not as well lament that we did not live a thousand years ago as that we shall not live a thousand years hence ? It is but travelling the great road, and to the place whither we must all go at last. It is but submitting to the law of nature, and to that lot which the whole world has suffered that is gone before us, and so must they, too, that are to come after us. Nay, how many thousands, when our time comes, will expire in the same moment with us ? He that will not follow shall be drawn by force ; and is it not much better, now, to do that willingly which we shall otherwise be made to do in spite of our hearts ? All that lies betwixt the cradle and the grave is uncertain. If we compute the troubles, the life even of a child is long ; if the sweetness of the passage, that of an old man is short. The whole is slippery and deceitful, and only death certain ; and yet all people complain of that which never deceived any man. How foolish a thing is it for a man to flatter himself with long hopes, and to pretend to dispose of the future ? Nay, the very present slips through our fingers, and there is not that moment which we can call our own. How vain a thing is it for us to enter upon projects, and to say to ourselves, Well ! I'll go build, purchase, discharge such offices, settle my affairs, and then retire ? We are

all of us born to the same casualties, all equally frail and uncertain of to-morrow. All things have their seasons ; they begin, they increase, and they die. The heavens and the earth grow old, and are appointed their periods. That which we call death is but a pause or suspension, and, in truth, a progress to life ; only our thoughts look downward upon the body, and not forward upon things to come. All things under the sun are mortal : cities, empires ; and the time will come when it shall be a question where they were, and, perchance, whether they ever had a being or no. Some will be destroyed by war, others by luxury, fire, inundations, earthquakes. Why should it trouble me, then, to die, as a forerunner of an universal dissolution ? A great mind submits itself to God, and suffers willingly what the law of the universe will otherwise bring to pass upon necessity. Let us live in our bodies as if we were only to lodge in them this night, and to leave them to-morrow. It is the frequent thought of death that must fortify us against the necessity of it. He that has armed himself against poverty may perhaps come to live in plenty. A man may strengthen himself against pain, and yet live in a state of health ; against the loss of friends, and never lose any ; but he that fortifies himself against the fear of death shall most certainly have occasion to employ that virtue. It is the care of a wise and a good man to look to his manners and actions, and rather how well he lives than how long ; for to die sooner or later is not the business, but to die well or ill, for death brings us to immortality.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *Against Immoderate Sorrow for the Death of Friends.*



NEXT to the encounter of death in our own bodies, the most sensible calamity to an honest man is the death of a friend ; and we are not, in truth, without some generous instances of those that have preferred a friend's life before their own ; and yet this affliction, which by nature is so grievous to us, is, by virtue and providence, made familiar and easy.

#### SORROW WITHIN BOUNDS IS ALLOWABLE.

To lament the death of a friend is both natural and just ;—a sigh or a tear I would allow to his memory, but no profuse or obstinate sorrow. Clamorous and public lamentations are not so much the effects of grief as of vain-glory. He that is sadder in company than alone, shows rather the ambition of his sorrow than the piety of it. In the long run time cures all, but it were better done by moderation and wisdom. The ostentation of grief is many times more than the grief itself. When anybody is within hearing, what groans and outcries !

When they are alone and private, all is hush and quiet. We forsake nature, and run over to the practices of the people that never were the authors of anything that is good. If destiny were to be wrought upon by tears, I would allow you to spend your days and nights in sadness and mourning—tearing of your hair and beating of your breast; but if fate be inexorable, and death will keep what he has taken, grief is to no purpose. And yet I would not advise insensibility and hardness; it were inhumanity, and not virtue, not to be moved at the separation of familiar friends and relations.

SORROW IS IN SOME CASES ALLOWABLE, AND  
INEVITABLE IN OTHERS.

A wise man gives way to tears in some cases, and cannot avoid them in others. When one is struck with surprise of ill news, as the death of a friend or the like, he lies under a natural necessity of weeping and trembling. In another case we may indulge our sorrow, as, upon the memory of a dead friend's conversation or kindness, one may let fall tears of generosity and joy. We favour the one, and we are overcome by the other, and this is well; but we are not upon any terms to force them; they may flow of their own accord without derogating from the dignity of a wise man, who at the same time both preserves his gravity and obeys nature. Nay, there is a certain decorum even in weeping; for excess of sorrow is as foolish as profuse laughter. We may



accuse fate, but we cannot alter it, for it is hard and inexorable, and not to be moved either with reproaches or tears. They may carry us to the dead, but never bring them back again to us. To mourn without measure is folly, and not to mourn at all is insensibility. The best temper is betwixt piety and reason; to be sensible, but neither transported nor cast down. He that can put a stop to his tears and pleasures when he will is safe. It is an equal infelicity to be either too soft or too hard. We are overcome by the one, and we are put to struggle with the other. There is a certain intemperance in that sorrow that passes the rules of modesty. The loss of a son, or of a friend, cuts a man to the heart, and there is no opposing the first violence of this passion; but when a man comes once to deliver himself wholly up to lamentations, he is to understand, that though some tears deserve compassion, others are yet ridiculous. A grief that is fresh finds pity and comfort; but when it is inveterate, it is laughed at, for it is either counterfeit or foolish. Beside that, to weep excessively for the dead is an affront to the living. The most justifiable cause of mourning is to see good men come to ill ends, and virtue oppressed by the iniquity of fortune. But in this case, too, they either suffer resolutely, and yield us delight in their courage and example, or meanly, and so give us the less trouble for the loss. He that dies cheerfully dries up my tears, and he that dies whiningly does not deserve them. I would bear the death of friends and children with the same constancy that I would expect

my own, and no more lament the one than fear the other. He that bethinks himself how often friends have been parted, will find more time lost among the living than upon the dead ; and the most desperate mourners are they that cared least for their friends when they were living, for they think to redeem their credits for want of kindness to the living by extravagant ravings after the dead. Some (I know) will have grief to be only the perverse delight of a restless mind, and sorrows and pleasures to be near akin ; and there are, I am confident, that find joy even in their tears. But which is more barbarous—to be insensible of grief for the death of a friend, or to seek for pleasure in grief when a son, perhaps, is burning, or a friend expiring. To forget one's friend, to bury the memory with the body, to lament out of measure, is all inhuman. He that is gone either would not have his friend tormented, or does not know that he is so. If he does not feel it, it is superfluous ; if he does, it is unacceptable to him. If reason cannot prevail, reputation may, for immoderate mourning lessens a man's character. It is a shameful thing for a wise man to make the weariness of grieving the remedy of it. In time the most stubborn grief will leave us, if in prudence we do not leave that first.

WE GRIEVE MORE FOR OUR OWN SAKES THAN FOR  
OUR FRIENDS.

But do I grieve for my friend's sake, or for my own ? Why should I afflict myself for the loss of

him that is either happy, or not at all in being? In the one case it is envy, and in the other it is madness. We are apt to say, What would I give to see him again, and to enjoy his conversation! I was never sad in his company; my heart leaped whenever I met him; I want him wherever I go. All that is to be said is, The greater the loss, the greater is the virtue to overcome it. If grieving will do no good, it is an idle thing to grieve; and if that which has befallen one man remains to all, it is as unjust to complain. The whole world is upon the march towards the same point. Why do we not cry for ourselves, that are to follow, as well as for him that is gone first? Why do we not as well lament beforehand for that which we know will be, and cannot possibly but be? He is not gone, but sent before. As there are many things that he has lost, so there are many things that he does not fear—as anger, jealousy, envy, etc. Is he not more happy in desiring nothing than miserable in what he has lost? We do not mourn for the absent; why then for the dead, who are effectually no other? We have lost one blessing, but we have many left; and shall not all these satisfactions support us against one sorrow?

A FRIEND MAY BE TAKEN AWAY, BUT NOT THE  
COMFORT OF THE FRIENDSHIP.

The comfort of having a friend may be taken away, but not that of having had one. As there is a sharpness in some fruits and a bitterness in some wines

that please us, so there is a mixture in the remembrance of friends, where the loss of the company is sweetened again by the contemplation of their virtues. In some respects I have lost what I had, and in others I retain still what I have lost. It is an ill construction of providence to reflect only upon my friend's being taken away, without any regard to the benefit of his being once given me. Let us, therefore, make the best of our friends while we have them, for how long we shall keep them is uncertain. I have lost a hopeful son, but how many fathers have been deceived in their expectations? and how many noble families have been destroyed by luxury and riot? He that grieves for the loss of a son—what if he had lost a friend?—and yet he that has lost a friend has more cause of joy that he once had him, than of grief that he is taken away. Shall a man bury his friendship with his friend? We are ungrateful for that which is past in hope of what is to come, as if that which is to come would not quickly be past too. That which is past we are sure of. We may receive satisfaction, it is true, both from the future and what is already past—the one by expectation, and the other by memory; only the one may possibly not come to pass, and it is impossible to make the other not to have been.

THERE IS NO DEALING WITH THE FIRST TRANSPORTS  
OF SORROW.

But there is no applying of consolation to fresh and bleeding sorrow; the very discourse irritates the grief,

and inflames it. It is like an unseasonable medicine in a disease—when the first violence is over it will be more tractable, and endure the handling. Those people whose minds are weakened by long felicity may be allowed to groan and complain, but it is otherwise with those that have led their days in misfortunes. A long course of adversity has this good in it—that though it vexes a body a great while, it comes to harden us at last; as a raw soldier shrinks at every wound, and dreads the surgeon more than an enemy, whereas a veteran sees his own body cut and lamed with as little concern as if it were another's. With the same resolution should we stand the shock and cure of all misfortunes. We are never the better for our experience if we have not yet learned to be miserable. And there is no thought of curing us by the diversion of sports and entertainments. We are apt to fall into relapses; wherefore we had better overcome our sorrow than delude it.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Poverty to a Wise Man is rather a Blessing than a Misfortune.*



(N) man shall ever be poor that goes to himself for what he wants; and that is the readiest way to riches. Nature indeed will have her due, but yet whatsoever is beyond necessity is superfluous and not necessary. It is not her business to gratify the palate, but to satisfy a craving stomach. Bread, when a man is hungry, does his work, let it be never so coarse, and water when he is a-dry; let his thirst be quenched and nature is satisfied, no matter whence it comes, or whether he drinks in gold, silver, or in the hollow of his hand. To promise a man riches and to teach him poverty is to deceive him. But shall I call him poor that wants nothing, though he may be beholden for it to his patience rather than to his fortune? Or shall any man deny him to be rich whose riches can never be taken away? Whether is it better to have much or enough? He that has much desires more, which shows that he has not yet enough, but he that has enough is at rest. Shall a man be reputed the less rich for not having that, for which he shall be banished, for which his very wife or son shall

poison him, when he has that which gives him security in war and quiet in peace, which he possesses without danger, and disposes of without trouble? No man can be poor that has enough, nor rich that covets more than he has. Alexander, after all his conquests, complained that he wanted more worlds; he desired something more, even when he had gotten all; and that which was sufficient for human nature was not enough for one man. Money never made any man rich, for the more he had the more he still coveted. The richest man that ever lived is poor, in my opinion, and in any man's may be so; but he that keeps himself to the stint of nature does neither feel poverty nor fear it; nay, even in poverty itself there are some things superfluous. The felicity of those the world calls happy, is a false splendour, dazzling to the eyes of the vulgar; but our rich man is glorious and happy within. There is no ambition in hunger or thirst. Let there be food, and no matter, for the table, the dish, and the servants; nor with what meats nature is satisfied. Those are the torments of luxury that rather stuff the stomach than fill it; it studies rather to cause an appetite than to allay it. It is not for us to say, This is not handsome, that is common, the other offends my eye. Nature provides for health, not delicacy. When the trumpet sounds a charge the poor man knows that he is not aimed at. When they cry out fire his body is all he has to look after; if he be to take a journey there is no blocking up of streets and thronging of passages for a parting compliment. A small matter fills his belly and

contents his mind; he lives from day to day without carking or fearing for to-morrow. The temperate rich man is but his counterfeit; his wit is quicker and his appetite calmer.

POVERTY IS ONLY TROUBLESOME IN OPINION.

No man finds poverty a trouble to him but he that thinks it so; and he that thinks it so makes it so. Does not a rich man travel more at ease with less luggage and fewer servants? Does he not eat, by the way, many times as little and as coarse as a poor inan? Does he not, for his own pleasure, sometimes, and for variety, feed upon the ground, and use only earthen vessels? Is not he a madman, then, that always fears what he often desires, and dreads the thing that he takes delight to imitate? He that would know the worst of poverty, let him but compare the looks of the rich and of the poor, and he shall find the poor man to have a smoother brow, and to be more merry at heart; or if any trouble befalls him, it passes over like a cloud; whereas the other, either his good humour is counterfeit or his melancholy deep and abiding, and the worse because he dares not publicly own his misfortune; but he is forced to play the part of a happy man, even with a load upon his heart. His felicity is but personated, and if he were but stripped of his ornaments he would be contemptible. In buying of a horse we take off his cloths and his trappings, and examine his shape and body for fear of being cozened; and shall we put an estimate upon



a man for being set off by his fortune and quality? Nay, if we see anything of ornament about him we are to suspect him the more for some infirmity under it. He that is not content in poverty would not be so neither in plenty; for the fault is not in the thing, but in the mind. If he be sickly, remove him from a cottage to a palace, he is at the same pass; for he carries his disease along with him. What can be happier than that condition both of mind and of fortune from which we cannot fall? What can be a greater felicity than in a covetous designing age for a man to live safe among informers and thieves? It puts a poor man into the very condition of providence that gives all without reserving anything to itself. How happy is he that owes nothing but to himself, and only that which he can easily refuse or easily pay! I do not reckon him poor that has but a little! but he is so that covets more; it is a fair degree of plenty to have what is necessary. Whether had a man better find satiety in want or hunger in plenty? It is not the augmenting of our fortunes, but the abating of our appetites that makes us rich. Why may not a man as well contemn riches in his own coffers as in another man's? and rather hear them spoken of as his than feel them to be so? though it is a great matter not to be corrupted even by having them under the same roof. He is the greater man that is honestly poor in the middle of plenty; but he is the most secure that is free from the temptation of that plenty, and has the least matter for another to design upon. It is no great business for a poor man

to preach the contempt of riches, or for a rich man to extol the benefits of poverty, because we do not know how either the one or the other would behave himself in the contrary condition. The best proof is the doing of it by choice, and not by necessity; for the practice of poverty in jest is a preparation toward the bearing of it in earnest. But it is yet a generous disposition so to provide for the worst of fortunes, as what may be easily borne. The premeditation makes them not only tolerable but delightful to us, for there is that in them without which nothing can be comfortable, that is to say, security. If there were nothing else in poverty but the certain knowledge of our friends, it were yet a most desirable blessing when every man leaves us but those that love us. It is a shame to place the happiness of life in gold and silver, for which bread and water is sufficient. For the honour of poverty, it was both the foundation and the cause of the Roman empire; and no man was ever yet so poor but he had enough to carry him to his journey's end.

MEDIOCRITY IS THE BEST STATE OF FORTUNE.

All I desire is that my poverty may not be a burden to myself, or make me so to others; and that is the best state of fortune, that is neither necessitous, nor far from it. A mediocrity of fortune, with a gentleness of mind, will preserve us from fear or envy, which is a desirable condition, for no man wants power to do mischief. We never consider the

blessing of coveting nothing, and the glory of being full in ourselves, without depending upon fortune. With parsimony, a little is sufficient, and without it, nothing, whereas frugality makes a poor man rich. If we lose an estate, we had better never have had it. He that has least to lose has least to fear; and those are better satisfied whom fortune never favoured, than those whom she has forsaken. The state is most commodious that lies betwixt poverty and plenty. Diogenes understood this very well when he put himself into an incapacity of losing anything. That course of life is most commodious which is both safe and wholesome. The body is to be indulged no farther than for health, and rather mortified than not kept in subjection to the mind. It is necessary to provide against hunger, thirst, and cold; and somewhat for a covering to shelter us against other inconveniences, but not a pin matter whether it be of turf or of marble. A man may lie as warm and as dry under a thatched as under a gilded roof. Let the mind be great and glorious, and all other things are despicable in comparison. The future is uncertain; and I had rather beg of myself not to desire anything than of fortune to bestow it.

LETTERS AND OTHER EXTRACTS.



## LETTERS AND OTHER EXTRACTS.

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### I. GOD IN NATURE.

(I.)



HERE be some that say that God bestoweth no good upon us, but is altogether careless and regardless of us, and deigning not to cast his eyes upon this world, busieth himself about other matters; or else (which seemeth to others to be the chiefest felicity) he doeth nothing, and neither benefits nor injuries touch him. He that thus saith heareth neither the vows of those that pray, nor the cries and vows which every one maketh, as well in private as in public, lifting up their hands in supplication to heaven; which undoubtedly would not be done, neither would all mankind consent unto this madness to implore a deaf deity, and invoke such gods as have no power to help them, if they knew not assuredly that the gods give benefits, sometimes of their own proper motion, other whiles upon prayers: that it is they from whom we receive so many great graces in their due times and seasons, and that by their assistance we are put out of fear of such imminent and great mischiefs as

daily threaten us. Who is he that is so miserable and whom heaven rejecteth? Who is he that is so disgraced and born to continual affliction and travail, that hath not sometimes felt these great favours and liberalities of the gods? Do but behold, I pray you, even those who incessantly complain of their miseries, and who live so malcontented with their fortunes. Yet shalt thou find that they are not wholly exempted and destitute of success from heaven, and that there is no man on whom there hath not fallen some drops from this sweet and gracious fountain. Thinkest thou that it is a small matter which is equally distributed to all those that are born in the world? And, to omit those things which the gods bestow at their pleasure, with all due proportion, is it a small matter that nature hath given us when she hath given us herself?

## (II.)

Doth not God bestow all benefits upon us? From whence, then, hast thou all these things whereof thou art possessed?—which thou givest, which thou deniest, which thou keepest, which thou takest unjustly? From whence come the infiniteness of things that delight the eyes, affect the ear, and pleasure the understanding? From whence is this abundance that furnisheth our riotous excess?—for not only are our necessities provided for, but we are pampered even unto delicacy also. From whence have we so many trees, bearing sundry sorts of savoury fruit; so many wholesome herbs for the

maintenance of our healths; such variety of meats, answering unto the seasons of the whole year, that an idle sluggard may find by casualty sufficient sustenance upon the earth to feed and nourish him. Whence came so many sorts of beasts? whereof some are bred on the earth, some in the water, and others descending from the air, to the end there might not be any part of nature that should not be tributary unto us of some rent? and the rivers likewise, whereof some environ the plains with their pleasant revolutions and meanderings, whilst others, through their hollow and navigable channels, bring us merchandise from foreign seas. Some streams, at certain prefixed times, take wonderful increase, so as the sudden force of the summer's flood moisteneth and watereth those grounds which are situate and planted under the droughty and burning zone. What shall I say of the springs of medicinable waters? What shall I speak of the bubbling and boiling up of hot baths even upon the very shores?

· “ And what of thee, O mighty Lake, and thee,  
Proud billowed Benac, swelling like the sea.”

VIRGIL, *Georgic I.*

(III.)

If a man had given thee a few acres of land, thou wouldest say that thou hadst received a benefit at his hands; and deniest thou that the immeasurable extent of the whole earth is no benefit? If a man should give thee money, and fill thy coffer, for that seemeth a great thing in thy sight, thou wouldest term it



benefit. And thinkest thou it no favour that God hath hidden so many metals in the earth, spread so many rivers on the sands, which floating discover ingots of massy gold, silver, brass, and iron, which he hath hidden everywhere; that he hath given thee means and knowledge to find it out, by setting marks of his covert riches upon the surface of the earth? If a man should give thee a house enriched with marble pillars; if the cover thereof were resplendent, and painted with gold and goodly colours, couldest thou highly esteem this present of his? God hath builded thee a great palace, whose foundations are everlasting, wherein thou seest not little pieces smaller than the chisel itself wherewith they were carved, but entire huge masses of precious stone, all fastened and fashioned after a different manner, the least piece whereof maketh thee wonder at the beauty of the same: the roof whereof shineth after one sort by day and after another by night; and wilt thou deny that thou hast received any benefit at all? Again, whereas thou settest great store by that which thou hast, thinkest thou, which is the part of a thankless person, that thou art beholden to nobody for such? Whence hast thou this breath which thou drawest? Whence cometh this light, whereby thou disposest and orderest the actions of thy life? From whence hast thou thy blood, in the motion and flowing whereof thy natural heat is maintained? Whence come these meats, which, by their delicate tastes and pleasing savors, invite thee to eat? Whence come these things which awaken

thy pleasures, and delight thee when thou art wearied ? Whence cometh this quiet and repose wherein thou rottest and witherest away ? Wilt thou not say, if thou art thankful ?—

“ From God springs this repose, and evermore  
Him for my God I'll honour and adore ;  
Upon his altar to perform my vow  
A firstling lamb my pasture shall allow :  
For he it is, as thou dost plainly see,  
That yields my wandering team their pasture free,  
He lets me tune at pleasure as they feed,  
My country lays upon mine oaten reed.”

VIRGIL, 1st *Eclogue*.

It is that God which hath not only permitted us to feed a small number of herds, but that hath filled the whole world with great troops of cattle ; that nourisheth all beasts which wander here and there in so many and divers places ; that giveth them new pastures in summer time after they have eaten up their winter provision ; which hath not only taught us to play upon a reed, and after some manner to tune it and delightfully to sing unto it, but also hath invented so many arts, so many varieties of voices, and so many sounds to yield sundry tunes, some by force of our own breath, and others by borrowed and external air. For thou canst not call those things which we have invented ours no more than thou canst call it our own doing that we grow, or that the body hath its full proportion according to its determinate times. First we lose our milk-teeth, anon we pass into manhood, which, after our young and springing years,

maketh us become more strong, and setteth us in a perfect and manly form. Finally, we come to the last period, which maketh an end of the case and course of our life. The seeds of all ages and all sciences are hidden in us from our birth, and that great workman, God, produceth out of the hidden all our faculties.

(IV.)

It is nature, saith one, that communicateth and giveth me all these things. Understandest thou not that in speaking after this manner thou changest the name of God? For what else is Nature but God, and a divine being and reason, which resideth in the world and in all the parts thereof? As often as thou listeth thou mayest call him, sometimes the Author of all things, and sometimes Jove, most good and most mighty. Thou mayest also well term him the Thunderer and Established, who had not that last name given him, because after the Romans had made their vows to him, he reinforced their hearts and discomforted armies on their behalf, but because all things stand and are established by his kindness he is therefore so called. Thou shalt not also lie if thou call him Destiny; for whereas Fate or Destiny is but an immutable ordinance, which holdeth all causes tied and chained together, he it is that is the first of all, and he on whom all the rest that follow do depend. Thou mayest fit him with any other name whatsoever thou wilt, provided it signify and contain the force and effects of celestial things. In brief, he may have as many

names as he hath attributes or graces wherewith he bestcadeth us.

## (v.)

Some likewise suppose that he is Father Liber, others that he is Hercules and Mercury : Father Liber, because all things have had their being and original from him, because that by his means we first of all found out and knew the power and virtue of seeds, which should afterwards nourish us with a sweet and honest pleasure ; Hercules, because his force is invincible, which, when it shall be wearied in performing actions and producing inferior things, shall return into fire ; Mercury, because it is he from whom reason proceedeth, and the judgment, numbers, ranks, and order of things, and all those sciences which we term liberal. Whithersoever thou turnest thee, there shalt thou see him meet with thee ; nothing is void of him. He himself filleth his work to the full. Thou prevailest nothing, then, ungrateful man, when thou avowest that thou art noways indebted to God but to Nature ; for neither is Nature without God, nor God without Nature. But these two are but one, and differ not. If thou shouldest confess that thou owest to Annæus or to Lucius that which Seneca hath lent, then thou wouldest only change the name, but not the creditor ; for whatever thou callest him, by his name or his surname, it is always one man. Call him, then, as thou pleasest, either Nature, or Fate, or Fortune—it makes no matter, because they are all the names of the self-same

God, who diversely useth his divine providence. Even as Justice, Integrity, Prudence, Magnanimity, Temperance, and the goods and virtues of the soul of any of these, please thee, it is then the soul that pleaseth thee also.

## II. THE DIVINITY OF MAN.



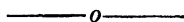
THOU doest a worthy thing, Lucilius, and profitable to thyself, if, as thou writest, thou perseverest to obtain a good mind. How fond is it to be ever wishing for it when thou canst confer it on thyself?

Our hands need not to be lifted up to heaven, nor the sacristan entreated to put us on speaking terms with the image, that we may be the better heard. God is nigh unto thee, he is with thee, he is within thee. Thus tell I thee, Lucilius: a sacred spirit is resident in us, an observer and guardian both of what is good and what is evil in us, and in like manner as we use him so he useth us. There is no good man but hath a God within him. May any man rise superior to fortune, except he be assisted by him? He it is that giveth the noblest and most upright counsels. In every good man some God (we know not which) abideth. If happily thou lightest upon a thick grove full of trees, both old and of no common height, shadowing the sight of heaven from

thee by reason of the thickness of the boughs which interlace with one another; then doth the height of the wood, the secrecy of the place, and thy wonder at the shadow, so thick and continue in the open sky, inspire thee with a faith in a deity. And so it is with a cave beneath a frowning mountain eaten out of the rock, not made with hands, but hollowed naturally to such a width; it will strike thy mind with a certain conceit of religion. The well-springs of great rivers we adore. A sudden eruption of a vast river out of the depth hath altars. The fountains of warm water are honoured, and the shadow or huge depth of some standing pool hath something sacred in it. And if thou beholdest a man that is dreadless of perils, untouched with desires, happy in his afflictions, calm in tempests, contemplating men from a high place, the gods from an equal, will not a certain veneration of him overcome thee? Wilt thou not say, This is too great and high a being to be considered on a level with the little body which it inhabiteth? The divine power descendeth hither. This excellent and moderate mind, which overpasseth all things as if beneath it, laughing at whatsoever we either fear or hope, surely is enkindled by a celestial power. So great a thing cannot consist without divine support. Therefore, as touching the greatest part of him, he is there from whence he descended. And just as the sunbeams do in a manner touch the earth, but remain in that place from whence they are sent, so is it with a great and sacred mind. What manner of mind, therefore, is this? One that, apprehending the divine

things within it, relieth on no other good but its own. For what is more foolish than to praise that in a man which is not his own? And what more mad than the man that admireth those things which may be immediately transferred to another man? The golden reins make not the horse the better. In one sort doth the lion, with his tawny mane, demean himself when tamed, and compelled (being overwearied) patiently to take his trapping; in another sort such a one as is generous and untamed. The latter being sharp in his assault, such as nature would have him to be, fair in his dreadfulnesse, comely in this, that his aspect is fearsome, is preferred before the former in his weakness and ornaments. No man ought to glory but in that which is his own. We praise the vine if she load her branches with fruit, if she beareth down her underprops unto the ground, by reason of the weight of those branches she beareth. Will any man prefer before this, that vine which hath golden grapes and golden leaves hanging from it? The proper virtue in the vine is fertility; in a man also, that is to be praised which is his own. He hath a fair train, a goodly house; he soweth much, he maketh much by usury. None of these things is in him, but about him. Praise that in him which never may be taken away nor given, which is properly a man's. Askest thou what it is? The mind, and perfect reason in the mind. For man is a reasonable creature; his good, therefore, is consummate, if he hath fulfilled that to which he was born. But what is that which this reason exacteth at his hands? An easy matter to

live according to his nature, but common madness maketh this thing difficult. We thrust one another into vices; but how may they be recalled unto health whom no man restraineth and the people thrusteth on.



### III. A VIRTUOUS LIFE THE ONLY HAPPY ONE.



HAPPY letter hath delighted me, and awakened me when I was wearied, and quickened my memory also, which is now dull and heavy. What hindereth thee, Lucilius, from entertaining this persuasion, that what is most instrumental towards attaining a blessed life is the conviction that there is only one good, namely, virtue? He that hath limited all good to that which is virtuous, is happy in himself; for he that judgeth that other things are good subjecteth himself to the power of fortune, and dependeth on other men's will. This man mourns for the loss of his children; another is careful of them that are sick, a third is sad at dishonesty and wrong. Thou shalt see this man tormented with the love he beareth towards another man's wife, that man with the love he beareth his own. There are some, too, that are distracted with



rebuffs, and others that honour vexeth. But the greatest number of those that are miserable are those whom the expectation of death, which threatens them on every side, presseth and tormenteth incessantly; for there is no point from whence they think that they are secure from her assaults. Therefore, they must always be looking about them on every side, as if they lived in an enemy's country, and at every voice they hear turning their necks thitherward. Now, except this fear be expelled from their breasts, they live in continual heart-break and trepidation. Thou shalt meet some that have been sent into exile, and deprived of their goods, and some too poor in their riches, which kind of poverty is the most irksome. Thou shalt meet with some that have been shipwrecked, or have suffered something like unto it, whom either the wrath or envy of the common sort (which is a dangerous weapon to wound the better sort) hath overthrown unawares, and when they thought themselves most secure; even as a squall, which is wont to descend on the security of a calm, or as sudden lightning, at whose crack all the neighbourhood trembled. For even as he that is nearest to the flash remaineth as much amazed as if he had been stricken; in like sort, in these accidents that come by violence, calamity involveth but one, but fear the rest, and maketh the possibility of suffering equal to the heaviness of those that do suffer. Other men's misfortunes, which surprise them at unawares, astonish the minds of all those that see them. Just as the mere noise of a sling, although it be not charged, frighteth

the birds, so we not only tremble at the strokes, but at the least crack we hear. No man, therefore, can be blessed that hath brought himself to this state of mind, for nothing is blessed but that which is without fear; the life is miserable that is incumbered with suspicion. Whosoever hath allowed himself to be troubled very much with casualties, hath provided himself with great and ceaseless matter of perturbation. There is but one path for him to follow, which will lead to a life full of assurance—that is, to contemn the goods of fortune, and to content himself with that which is virtuous; for if any man thinketh that there is any other thing good besides the same, he openeth his lap to that which fortune scattereth, and with extreme care expecteth those goods whereof she maketh largess. Propose this image to thy mind, that fortune holdeth games, and that she casteth to this great assembly of men honours, riches, and favours, whereof some are broken and torn in pieces by the hands of those that scramble for them; others are unequally divided by a disloyal society; and, lastly, others have wrought the utter ruin of the hands that clutched them: of which last some have fallen into the hands of those that thought not anywise of them, others have been lost by running after the same over-greedily, and been torn from the hand by reason of the over-greedy desire which they had to attain them. To conclude, there is none how happy soever in his greediness, whose joy in respect of it can endure long time. For which the wiser sort, as soon as they see the prizes

brought in, fly out of the theatre, as knowing well that a little thing would cost them dear. No man fighteth with him that retireth, no man striketh him that flieth; it is over the prey that strife is kindled. It is the same with those things that fortune casteth down from on high. We burn in miserable desire after these goods, we are in great travail, we desire to have a multitude of hands; now regard we this man, presently that one. Those things which stir up our desires we think are too slowly sent unto us. True, they can fall but into few men's hands; still they may be expected and desired by all men: we desire to catch them as they fall; we laugh if we are lucky enough to get anything, and are the butt of the envy of those whom vain hope hath deceived. We recoup a large outlay with a small prize, or we get nothing at all. Let us, therefore, depart from these games, and let us give place to those that would scramble. Let these men fix their intention as much as they will on those goods which hang in the air, and let themselves likewise be more in suspense. Whosoever is resolved to be blessed, let him resolve there is but one good, which is virtue; for if he supposeth that there is any other good, he judgeth evil of God's providence—first, because many mishaps befall good men, and, secondly, because all that which he hath given us is but of a very small continuance compared with the age of the whole world. From this complaint it groweth that we are ungrateful interpreters of divine things. We complain because benefits befall us not every day, and that such as do are little, uncertain, and must

suddenly depart from us. Hence cometh it to pass that we will not live, neither have desire to die; we hate life, and we fear death. All our counsels are uncertain, and there is no felicity that can satisfy us. The cause hereof is nothing else but that we have not as yet attained that sovereign good, which cannot be surmounted by any other thing, and on which we ought to stay our desires, inasmuch as that above that part which is highest there is no other place. Askest thou me why virtue has need of nothing? It is because she is pleased with things present, and desireth not things to come. There is nothing but seemeth great unto her, because that everything sufficeth her. And if thou shouldst separate thyself from this opinion, neither piety nor faith will make their abode with thee. He that would follow both the one and the other shall be constrained to suffer very much of that which we call evil, and to expend much of that which we esteem and reckon for good. Constancy, that must make trial of herself, perisheth, magnanimity perisheth also, because she cannot come to eminence except she contemn all things as over base which the common sort chiefly desireth. Kindness perisheth, and requital of all good turns as well, if we think that there is any other thing more precious than faith, and if we fix not our eyes on that which is best. But to let these things pass—either those that are called good are none at all, or a man is happier than God. For God maketh no use of those goods which are prepared for us, neither disordinate pleasure, foolish

expenses in feasts, riches, nor any of that which may allure a man or draw him to loathsome pleasures, appertain to him. We must then say, either that God lacketh these goods, which is impossible, or we must consider this a proof that these things are not good because God lacketh them. Furthermore, there are many things that are thought to be good which are more properly the attributes of beasts than men. They eat with greater greediness, their loves are fiercer, their forces are greater and more lasting, whereby it followeth that they are happier than men, for they live without wickedness or deceit; they enjoy their pleasures, which they enjoy more fully and more easily, because without any fear of shame or repentance. Consider thou, therefore, whether that is to be called good wherein God is overcome by man. Let us place the sovereign good in our minds. It loseth its grace and dignity, if, from the better part which is in us, it is translated to the worse, and transferred to the senses, which are more active in brute beasts. Our supreme felicity is not to be placed in the flesh. Those are true goods which reason giveth; they are solid and everlasting, which cannot fail, neither be decreased nor diminished. The rest are goods in opinion; their only connection with the true ones is a common name, but they have no property or effects of virtue in them. Let them, then, be called conveniences, or, according to our phrase, accidents. But let us know that they are but as our servants, and not any part of us. Let them be in such sort with us, that we remember ourselves that they are externals, and if

they abide with us we must consider them as of the number of those things which are subject unto and beneath us, and for which no man ought to wax proud. For what is more foolish than for a man to congratulate himself upon that which himself hath not done? Let all these things touch us, but not cleave unto us, so that if they must be drawn from us, let them, when they be severed, leave no scar. Let us use them but not boast of them, and let us use them but sparingly, and as such things as are lent unto us and remain not. Whosoever useth them contrary to reason, he hath not long time enjoyed them; for felicity hurteth us, except she be well tempered and governed; is quickly gone if she base herself on fleeting goods, and lest she should be forsaken, she tormenteth herself infinitely. There are few men who have had the fortune to lay by their felicity contentedly. The rest of men are dejected with those goods that made them esteemed above others, and that which for a time exalted them finally humbleth them. Prudence, therefore, must be made use of, which may dispose them with measure and parsimony; for a disordinate liberty overbeareth and destroyeth riches, which it feeds upon in such sort, that immeasurable expense hath never continued long, if reason, by her moderation, hath not restrained the same. The miserable end of divers cities will make thee know this, whose luxurious empires in their first flower and pride have decayed, and will teach thee that all that which hath been gotten by virtue is ruined by importunity and lavish

expense. Against these casualties are we to arm ourselves. There is not any wall that can resist the batteries of fortune, and it is inside that we should place the buttress. If that noble fortress be assured, a man may be assailed, but he cannot be overcome. Wilt thou know what is this weapon which a wise man useth? That he trouble not himself with anything that may happen; that he believe that the very things which seem to offend him are part of the regular order of the universe, and a part of that which finisheth the course and office of the world. A man ought to take delight in all that which delighteth God. Upon this he ought to pride himself, and all that which is in him, for that he cannot be vanquished, that he treadeth down evil under his feet; and that with reason, than which nothing is more powerful, he surmounteth fortune, grief, and injury. Love reason, for it will be unto thee as an arm against all the greatest misfortunes that may be. It is love of their young ones causeth wild beasts to fall into snares, who otherwise, by their fierceness and violence, are not to be taken. Sometimes the desire of glory hath drawn some young and generous minds into contempt both of sword and fire. The shape and shadow of virtue hath urged some on to seek out a voluntary death. But how much stronger and more constant is reason than these, and how much more vehement and violent is she, walking as she doth through fear and danger. "You gain nothing," some man will say, "in denying that there is no other good than virtue. This defence of yours shall not make

you strong and impregnable against fortune ; for you say that amongst the good things of this world a man ought to include obedient children, cities well governed, and virtuous parents. And yet, if these be in any danger, you cannot see it without astonishment. A siege of thy city, the death of thy children, and the bondage of thy parents, will trouble thee." But I will first set down that which is usually answered for us in this case, and then will add thereunto what may be answered besides, in my judgment. In quite another state are those things which, being taken from us, substitute some other incommodity in their place—for instance, health, being impaired, changeth itself into sickness ; the sight of the eye extinguished affecteth us with blindness ; and when an animal is hamstrung, not only does its speed perish, but debility ensueth. There is not this danger in those things which we have spoken of a little before. Why ? Because, if I have lost a good friend, it needs not that I must therefore be perfidious in his place ; neither, if I have buried good children, is there reason that impiety should supply their place. Moreover it is not friends and children are dead, but only their bodies. Good cannot be lost but by one means only, that is if it should change itself into evil, which nature permitteth not, for virtue and all its works remain incorruptible. Again, although friends, although good and dutiful children, be dead, yet, notwithstanding, there is something that may supply their place. Askest thou me what it may be ? It is that virtue that hath made them good. She



suffereth not at any time that there should be any place void ; she entirely taketh possession of our souls ; she wipeth away all sorrow, and is sufficient in herself, —for the powers and original of all goods are in her. What skilleth it if the water that floweth is stolen, or fleet away if the fountain from whence it issueth be living and replenished. Thou wilt not say that a man is more just because his children are alive, or less so for that they are dead,—by their death he is made neither more moderate, nor more honest, nor more wise, nor better ; consequently a great number of friends make not a man more wise, neither doth the diminution or want of them make him more foolish, and consequently, also, neither more happy, nor more miserable. As long as thy virtue shall remain entire thou shalt never feel any loss that thou hast made. What then ? Is not he that is environed with a goodly troop of friends and children made happy ? What is there to prevent him being so ? Because the highest good cannot be diminished or augmented. He always remaineth after the same fashion. Howsoever fortune carry herself, although he come to length of days, or die before he be aged, the measure of the highest good is the same, although it be different in age. Whether thou makest a circle greater or lesser is but a matter of size, not of shape ; and although the one shall have remained a long time, and the other be written in the dust and shortly effaced, yet both the one and the other were the same figure. That which is right and just is not a matter of space, time, or number ; it can neither be lengthened

nor strengthened. Take as much as thou wilt, an honest life that endured one hundred years, and reduce and determine it to one day only, the one is as honest as the other. At one time Virtue extendeth herself more at large: she governeth kingdoms, cities, and the whole provinces; she maketh laws; she prizeth and honoureth friendship; she distributeth offices and duties between the nearest parents and their children; at another time she circumscribeth herself in a straiter scope of poverty, banishment, and loss of children. Yet is she not lessened, although that from a great and high estate she is fallen into a private and particular, from a royal throne to a lowly seat, or from a public and ample power she contract herself into a homely cottage or a nook of the earth. She is always equally great, if, after she hath been driven from all places, she retireth herself into herself alone. Notwithstanding this, she hath a courage great and invincible, a prudence that is perfect, a justice immovable, and consequently she is always happy; for this blessedness and this good is lodged in one place only, that is to say, in the mind. It is everlasting, and full of tranquillity, which cannot be without the knowledge of divine and human things. Here now will I add that which I desire to answer on my own account. A wise man tormenteth not himself for the loss of his children nor his friends, for he endureth their death with a constancy which equals the courage with which he expecteth his own. He feareth the one as little as he grieveth for the other. Because virtue is a harmony, and all her works

consistent and agreeable with herself, this consistency would be lost if the mind, which should be exalted, should suffer itself to be abased with sorrow and sadness. All sort of perturbation, whether arising from fear or hope, all idleness and slackness, in any act whatsoever, is not virtuous, and so immoral. For what is virtuous is also secure, and brooketh not let or hindrance; it is never astonished, but always prepared. What then, shall he not feel some passion like unto trouble? shall he not change his colour? shall not his countenance be moved? shall not his limbs wax chill? and all other things which a man doeth, not by the command of the mind, but by a sudden and inconsiderate heat of nature? I confess, he shall. But he shall always be thus persuaded, that none of all this is evil, nor can that be worthy which a good understanding lacketh. All that which he ought to do, he will do boldly and readily; for who is he that will not say that it is the property of folly to perform that which he doth cowardly, and against his heart, and to drive the body into one place and the mind into another, and to suffer himself to be drawn by so many contrary emotions? Everything for which she esteemeth herself so much, and for which she entereth into admiration of herself, maketh her contemptible, and besides that, which is worse, she performeth not that with a good will from whence she taketh her glory. But if she feareth that any evil should befall her, she perplexeth herself in expectation thereof; she tormenteth herself as if the evil had already attained her, and all that which she

fearth she may suffer hereafter, she presently suffereth by means of her fear. Even as there are certain signs that appear in the body before the sickness cometh, when a man feeleth a dulness in the sinews, a lassitude, a gaping or yawning, and a shivering through all the limbs, in like sort a weak mind feeleth some shakings before the evil touch him ; he goes out to meet sorrows, and loseth his heart before the time. But what greater folly may a man see than for anyone to dismay his mind for such things as are yet for to come ? being unable to reserve himself to suffer the torment when it shall come, and summoning miseries from afar off, and approaching them before they press him, which it were better to delay if it be not possible to avoid. Wilt thou know that no man ought to be tormented for that which is to come ? Whosoever shall hear it said, that some fifty years hence he must be led to execution, and tormenteth himself because he hath passed the half of this time, plungeth himself in a disquiet of mind, which should not come but in an age after. The like befalleth those spirits that are voluntarily sick, and do nothing but seek occasion for sorrow, who are sad for things long since past and forgotten. Both that which is past and that which is to come is absent. We feel neither. But there is no grief but of that which thou feelest.

## IV. TRUE RICHES.



S oftentimes as I have found anything, I wait not till thou say, "I cry halves." I say this unto myself. Thou askest me what it is that I have discovered. Open thy lap; it is clear gain that I give thee. I will teach thee how thou mayest become rich suddenly, which thou art very desirous to hear of. And rightly so. I will lead thee the shortest way to great riches. Yet wilt thou have need of a creditor, and in order to negotiate, thou must borrow; still I will not suffer thee to have any solicitor to borrow for thee, nor broker to publish thy name. I will furnish thee with a creditor cut and dried—to wit, such an one as Cato used to furnish; yourself shall be your own creditor. His maxim was, "Whatsoever it be, it will suffice, provided that we require of ourselves whatsoever we want." For it is all one, Lucilius, not to desire and to have. The effect of both is alike; vexation will cease. Neither do I command thee this, to deny nature anything; she is obstinate, she cannot be overcome, she requireth her own: but that thou shouldest know that whatsoever exceedeth nature is but borrowed, and not necessary. I am an hungry, I must eat; whether this bread be brown or white, it appertaineth nothing to nature. She will have the belly not delighted but filled. I am dry; whether this water be fetched from the next lake, or from the ice-house where it is cooled artificially, it concerneth nature noways. She

commandeth this one thing, that the thirst should be quenched. Whether the pot be gold, or crystal, or china, or the hollow of the hand, it skilleth not. Fix thine eye upon the end of all things, and thou shalt forsake superfluities. Hunger presseth me. Let thy hand lay hold of whatsoever is next thee ; the appetite shall make that toothsome, whatsoever I lay hold of. An hungry stomach is glad of anything. Thou demandest, therefore, what thing it is that delighteth me ? Methinks it is worthily spoken, "A wise man is a diligent seeker of natural riches." Thou payest me, sayest thou, with an empty platter. What is the common fund upon which I can draw ? I have already marked out my market, and looked about me upon what sea I should embark myself to follow traffic, what public estate I should rent, what merchandise I should send for. It is a deceit in thee to teach me poverty, when thou hadst promised me riches. Dost thou, then, esteem him poor that wanteth nothing ? Thou answerest that it is by his own means, and by the benefit of his patience, not of his fortune. Dost thou therefore judge him not to be rich because his riches cannot cease ? Whether hadst thou rather have much or sufficient ? He that hath much desireth more, which is an argument that as yet he hath not sufficient ; he that hath enough hath attained the end that never befalleth a rich man. Dost thou therefore think that these are not riches, because for them no man is banished, because for them no son hath given, his father poison, nor wife her husband ? because in war they are secure, in peace at rest ?

because it is neither dangerous to enjoy them nor troublesome to dispose them? Hath he but a little that hath neither cold, nor hunger, nor thirst? Jupiter himself hath no more. Never is that little which is sufficient; never is that much which is not sufficient. Alexander of Macedonia, after he had conquered Asia and the Indians, is poor; he seeketh what he may make his own, he searcheth out unknown seas; he sendeth out new navies upon the ocean, and, if I may say so, passeth and presseth beyond the bounds and limits of the world. That which sufficeth nature contenteth not a man. And some there have been found, that, having all things, have, notwithstanding, coveted somewhat. So great is the blindness of our minds, and so great the forgetfulness of men, that they remember not themselves of their beginnings when they see themselves advanced. This prince, that was lord of a little angle of Greece, and that without not some opposition, is sorry that, after he hath discovered and conquered so many nations, to hear say that he must return unto his own. Money never made any man rich. Contrariwise, there is not any man that hath gathered store of it together that is not become more covetous. Wouldst thou know the reason hereof? He that hath much beginneth to have a wish to have more. In sum, although thou set before me whom thou wilt, of those who are reputed as rich, as either Cræsus or Licinius, let him set down his revenues, and bring into the account both whatsoever he hath and whatsoever he hopeth to have;

yet this man, if thou believest me, is poor, or, as thou thyself wilt admit, may become so. But he that hath composed himself to that which nature requireth of his hands, is not only without the sense, but also without the fear of poverty. But to the end thou mayest know how hard a thing it is to restrain a man's affairs according to the measure of nature : this man whom we suppose to be moulded and fashioned according to his will, and whom thou callest poor, hath something which is superfluous. But riches attract and blind the common sort, when great sums of money are carried out of any man's house, when his roofs are enriched and garnished with gold, when his family are either comely in body or courtly in apparel. All these men's felicity is in the public ostentation ; but he whom we have exempted, both from the eye of the people and the hand of fortune, is blessed inwardly. For, as touching those with whom poverty hath taken up her abode under the feigned name of wealth, they have their goods in such sort as we are said to have the ague, when the ague hath us. For we ought to say just the opposite, that "the ague hath hold of him," and in like manner we ought to say, "Riches hold and possess him." There is nothing, therefore, which I would have thee remember more than this, of which no man is sufficiently admonished, that thou shouldest measure all things by natural desires, which content themselves with little or nothing. Only beware lest thou mistake vices for desires. Askest thou me upon what table, in what silver vessel, by what services and servants nature

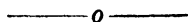


presenteth thee thy meat. Know that she requireth nothing but meat.

“ When parching thirst doth burn thy jaws throughout,  
Seekest thou for gold wherein to quench thy drought ?  
When hunger tempt’st thee, dost thou loath each meat,  
Except thou peacocks flesh or turbot eat ! ”

Hunger is not ambitious ; she is contented to cease, she careth not much by what means. These are the torments of unhappy excess : he seeketh how, after he is gluttoned, he may get an appetite ; how he may not fill, but force and stuff his body ; how he may renew his thirst again after it has been slaked by a former potion. Horace, therefore, wittily denied that it was any part of thirst to see in what pot or by how neat an handmaid water was ministered. For if thou thinkest that concerneth thee how beautiful the hair of the cupbearer is, or how clean and neat the cup itself is which he presenteth thee with, thou art not thirsty. Amongst other things, nature hath especially favoured us herein, that she hath taken all fastidiousness from necessity ; luxury taketh pleasure in variety. This is scarce seemly, that not well dressed, this offendeth mine eyes. The Creator of all things, who hath set down for us the laws of our life, hath given order to maintain us in health, and not to entertain us in delight. All things are ready and at hand for the conservation of our healths ; if the question be of delights, all that which concerneth them is not attained but with much misery and difficulty. Let us, therefore, make use of this benefit of nature, which

is to be numbered amongst the greatest, and let us think that the greatest matter wherein we are most obliged to her is, that she hath effected this in us, that whatsoever necessity desires is entertained and embraced without loathing.



## V. COUNSELS AGAINST ANGER.

### (I.)



WISE man ought not to be angry at errors. For what if a man should be angry with those that stumble in the dark, or against the deaf, because they do not that which they are commanded, because they understand it not? or against children, who, instead of thinking on their duties, busy themselves with play and sporting with their equals?—what if thou wouldest be angry with those that are sick, with such as are old and wearied? Amidst the rest of the incommodities of man's life, this is one: the darkness of our minds, and not only the necessity of erring, but the love of errors. If thou wilt not be displeased with any man, pardon all men, and excuse the infirmity of mankind.

### (II.)

The severity of a general is intended against private offenders; but then is pardon necessary where his

nor can hurt; their nature is mild and peaceable, and as far remote from doing others injury as themselves. Mad are they, therefore, and ignorant of truth, that impute unto them the raging of the seas, immeasurable showers, a rigorous winter, whenas there are none of these which either hurt or profit us, that are properly intended against us. For we are not the cause in this world of the revolution of winter and summer; these seasons are governed and have their order disposed by the gods. We estimate ourselves too highly if we suppose ourselves worthy that so great things should be moved for us. None of these things are done for our prejudice; nay, there is nothing done which is not for our good.

(v.)

Furthermore of this, remember thyself that we ourselves cannot as yet attain to a strict innocence of the laws. We have done some things and thought others. We are innocent in some affairs, because we could not effect them. Thinking thereupon, let us be more favourable to those that offend, more attentive to those that reprove us. When it shall be told thee that anyone hath spoken evil of thee, bethink thyself whether thou hast not begun it first, examine thyself to how many thou hast spoken. Let us think that other men do us no injury but that they requite us with the like, and that some do it of malice, some by constraint, and others through ignorance. Whosoever shall remember himself how oftentimes men have had an evil opinion of him, and interpreted the many good

services, and offices he hath done for injuries, how many men he hath loved whom he hated before time, will not be displeased upon every injury that is done unto him; he will say unto himself, "These faults likewise have I myself committed." Other men's sins are before our eyes, our own behind our backs. The greater part of men are angry with sinners, but not with the sin. We shall be more moderate if we examine ourselves, if we take counsel of ourselves, and examine whether we ourselves have not committed the like, whether we have erred in the same manner. Is it fit for us to condemn the same? Delay is a sovereign remedy against anger; neither require thou her in the beginning to pardon, but to judge. If anger delay, and admitteth any intermission, the fury thereof is abated. Strive not to attempt her all at once; her first assaults are most sharp, but thou shalt get the day of her, if thou dismember her little by little.

## (VI.)

It behoveth us also to consider the nature of him that offendeth. Is he a child? We bear with his age; he knoweth not whether he offendeth. Is he a father? Either beforetimes he hath done us so much good, that upon just ground we ought to forgive him the wrong he might do us, or peradventure we are offended without cause, and he himself hath an occasion to complain against us. Is she a woman? She is deceived. Is he commanded? Who, except he be vindictive, will be angry with necessity? Is he

hurt? It is no injury to suffer that which thou thyself profferedst first. Is he a judge? Rather trust thou his opinion than thine own. Is he a king? If he punish thee, being guilty, acknowledge his justice; if, being innocent, give place to thy patience. Is it a dumb heart, or a stone, or such like? Then act like unto it if thou art angry at it. Is it sickness or calamity? It will pass more lightly if we suffer it patiently. Is it God? Thou lovest as much time in murmuring at him as when thou prayest him to be angry against thy neighbour. Is he a good man that doeth thee injury? Believe it not. Is it an evil? Wonder not. Another man shall punish that wrong which he offereth thee, and he himself in doing evil is punished by himself.

## (VII.)

The too much love we bear ourselves is the cause whence it cometh that our enemy's injuries move us, and this it is which maketh us judge that our enemies should not touch us any ways. Every man hath the heart of a king in him, so that he will have authority over all men, and yet himself will be under no man's subjection. So, therefore, it is either our ignorance in things, or our insolence, that maketh us angry. As touching ignorance, are we to wonder if wicked men do wicked acts? Is it a new thing if our enemy do us the worst injury he may, if our friend forget himself sometimes, if our son or servant commit some fault? Expect, even in good manners, there will be something harsh; man's nature

beareth with traitorous friends, she endureth ungrateful men, she suffereth the covetous, she winketh at the impious. As touching insolence, remember thyself of this, that it is a heinous crime for a man to hurt his country, and therefore a citizen likewise, for he is part of his country. The parts are holy if the whole be venerable—therefore man to man, for he is a citizen in this great city which we call the world. What if the hands would harm the feet, and the eyes would not help the hands? Even as all the members are accorded together, because that it inporteth the whole body that the parts whereof it is composed should be entire, so ought we to support one another, because we are made to live in society. But this society cannot continue if the parts of the same assist not and maintain one another. We will not, therefore, strike a man because he hath offended, but to the end he offend no more; neither is punishment ever reserved to past offences, but those which are to come, because it is not ordained to entertain anger, but to prevent it; for if everyone should be punished that hath a depraved and offensive mind, no man should be exempt from punishment.

## (VIII.)

We ought to avoid anger, whether it be with our equals, with our superiors, or inferiors. To strive against our equals is a doubtful matter, against our superiors is fury, against our inferiors is baseness. It is the part of a silly and miserable man to bite him that biteth. It will make us more united if we

bethink ourselves how much he may profit us hereafter with whom we are angry, and the offences will be redeemed with mercies. As oftentimes as we shall be slow in pardoning, let us bethink us whether it should be good for us that all the world should be so affectioned against us. How oftentimes doth he require pardon who would not pardon? and how often hath a man humbled himself at such another man's feet whom he beforetime hath driven out of his presence. What is more glorious than to change enmity into amity? Shall any man be angry with thee? Reconcile thou him by thy benefits. The displeasure suddenly quaiileth whenas the one part forbearcth to contend. No man fighteth unless he is resisted. If both parts are contentious, he hath the better hand that first retircth himself, and he is conquered that overcometh. Hath he stricken thee? Fly back: for in striking him again thou shalt give him both occasion to strike often, and an excuse for striking; thou canst not be parted from him when thou wilt.

## (IX.)

A good man rejoiceth when he is admonished; a wicked man cannot brook a reprovcr. At a banquet some men's bitter jests and intemperate words have touched thee to the quick. Remember to avoid the vulgar company; after wine men's words are too lavish, and they that are then most sober in their discourses are scarce modest. If thou hast been seated in a place scarce answerable to thine honour, thou hast been angry with him that stood next thee, or with him

that invited thee, or with him that was preferred before thee. Fool as thou art, what matter is it in what place thou art sat at a table?—a cushion cannot make thee more or less honest.

(x.)

We shall subdue anger if from time to time we represent unto ourselves all those vices that are hatched under this passion; and if we consider the same as we ought, with all the dependencies and appurtenances, we must accuse her before ourselves, condemn her, examine her infirmities, and lay her open to view, then compare her with the most detestable vices, to the end that as yet we may be better instructed what she is. Avarice gathereth and locketh up against an honest man that is not covetous. Wrath consumeth all and gratifieth very few, and is welcome to none. She surpasseth malignity and hatred, for they are contented to see any man unhappy, while she will make him unhappy; the other two rejoice at those evils which come casually; she will not await chance; she will hurt him whom she hateth and will not be hurt. Anger is the canker of human nature. Nature inviteth us to amity, as anger to hatred. Nature commandeth us to assist one another, anger to hate one another; the one commandeth us to profit, the other to hurt. Add hereunto, that whereas indignation proceedeth from an overgreat suspicion, and seemeth to be courageous, yet is she weak and infirm, for no man is less than he by whom he suspecteth himself to be contemned. But a man that



is truly valiant, and that knoweth his own worth, revengeth not an injury, because he feeleth it not. Even as arrows recoil back if they be shot at some stony and hard mark, and such solid things as are stricken procure him grief that striketh them; so is there no injury that may pierce a great heart; it is far weaker than that it attempteth. How far more worthy a thing is it to despise all injuries and contumelies, as if the mind were impregnable. Revenge is a confession of pain. The mind is not great which is animated by injury. Either a stronger than thyself or a weaker hath wronged thee: if he be weaker than thyself spare him, if mightier, support thyself.


## (XI.)

Make use of this short time of thy life by making it peaceable both to thyself and others. Endear thyself in all men's love whilst thou livest, to the end that when thou diest thy loss may be lamented. Why frettest thou at thy servant, thy lord, thy king? Why art thou angry with thy dependants? Bear with them a little; behold, death is at hand, which shall make us equals. Let us finish that little remainder of our life in peace and quiet, and let not our death be a pleasure to any man. We have no leisure to wrestle with lesser evils when greater fear appeareth. What have we to do with fighting and ambushes? Dost thou wish him with whom thou art displeased anything more than death? Although thou sayest nothing to him, he shall die; thou lovest thy labour, thou wouldest do that which will be done. Whilst

we are among men let us embrace humanity, let us be dreadful and dangerous to no man ; let us condemn detriments, injuries, and slanders, and with great minds suffer short incommodities. Whilst we look behind us, as they say, and turn ourselves, behold, death doth presently attend us.

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## VI. CONSOLATIONS AGAINST DEATH.

N the epistle wherein thou bewailest the death of thy friend, as though he could and should have lived longer, I miss calmness and fairness, and that which is abundant in thee in thy dealings with people and in business, faileth thee in one matter, wherein it faileth all men. I have found many who are upright towards men, but none that are upright towards the gods. We are daily chiding destiny. "Why," we say, "was he taken away in the midst of his course? Why was not another taken? Why does a third drag out his old age, to the annoyance of himself and of others?" Whether, I pray thee, judgest thou it the fairer, that thou obey nature, or that nature obey thee? But what difference is there how soon thou depart, if thy departure is inevitable? We must not care for length of life, but for a life sufficient for our duties. For thou hast need of fate to live long; but that thou mayest live long enough, thou hast need only of courage. Life is long if it is

full; but it is full when the soul hath completed its development and hath shown all its latent powers. What do four-score years profit a man if they be spent in sloth? Such an one liveth not, but existeth; he died not at a ripe old age, but in his youth. But thou sayest, "He lived four-score years." That dependeth upon the day thou countest his death. That other, thou sayest, died young; yet he performed the duties of a good citizen, of a good friend, of a good son: in no part was he found wanting; his age was not perfect, his life was perfect. He was alive for four-score years, yea, rather, he lived four-score years; except, peradventure, thou sayest him to have lived as trees are said to live. I implore thee, Lucilius, to strive after this, that e'en as it is with precious things, so our life may not appear much in bulk, but great in value. Let us measure it by deeds, not by time. Wilt thou know what difference there is between this everlasting man, who, having contemned fortune, and discharged all the dues of life, at length attains the highest good, and him who is merely old? The one being dead yet liveth; the other being alive is yet dead. Him, therefore, let us praise, and place him in the number of the blessed, to whom how little time soever hath been allotted it is spent well. For he saw the true light, he was one of no ordinary sort, he liveth and will live both yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. Sometimes he sailed upon a level sea, and sometime, as happeneth oft, the brightness of the strong star hath been tempered by the clouds. Why askest thou how long he lived? I say he lived to

posterity ; he passed away, but gave himself to be a memory for all ages to come. I would not be understood to decline length of days on my own account, but to contend that nothing hath been wanting to a blessed life, if the space thereof be cut off. For I have considered that as my last day, which an eager hope hath determined upon ; but I have looked upon every day as my last. Why askest thou me when I was born and whether I reckon myself amongst those that are thought young ? That is my affair. Even as a short man may be a perfect one : so in a small measure of time there may be a perfect life. Age is amongst external things. How long shall I live is an accident ; how long I shall be a good man depends upon myself. Ask this rather of me, that I measure not out an ignoble age in obscurity ; that I may act my life, not be carried through it. Seekest thou what is the largest space of life ? To live to wisdom. He that cometh into that hath reached not only the furthest, but the greatest point. In this let him glory and give thanks unto the gods, and that he hath been such an one let him ascribe it not only to himself, but to nature. Deservedly shall he so ascribe it, for he hath returned a better life than he received. He hath set up the pattern of a good man ; he hath shewed what an one and how great he was ; had he added anything, it had been like unto that which went before. Still, how long do we live ? To enjoy the knowledge of all things. We know from what principles nature lifteth up herself on high, and how she ordereth the world, by what courses she recalleth the year, how she hath

concluded all things that were at any time, and hath made herself the end of herself. We know that the stars move by their own force; that nothing but the earth standeth still; that other things with a continual swiftness run on. We know how the moon passeth by the sun, wherefore, being more slow, she leaveth the swifter behind her; why she waxeth and waneth; what cause bringeth on the night, and what bringeth back the day. Thither must thou go where thou mayest behold these things face to face: neither saith the wise man, go I the more valiantly, because I judge that the way hath opened for me unto my gods. I have deserved, indeed, to be admitted, and even now have I in life been amongst them. While I lived I sent my soul thither, and they have sent theirs unto me. But suppose that I be destroyed; and that nothing remaineth of a man after death. I have alike as great a mind, although I depart from hence to go nowhither. He lived not so many years as he could. It is a book of but few verses; still it merits praise, and is useful. Dost thou judge that gladiator to be happier who is slain in the last day of the show than he who is slain in the midst of it? Thinkest thou that anyone is so desirous of life that he had rather be killed while taking his armour off than in the arena? No greater space of time divides our passages to eternity. Death goeth through all; he that striketh the blow followeth hard upon him who is struck. It is the smallest thing about which men are so anxiously busy. For what mattereth it how long thou avoidest that which thou knowest that thou canst not avoid for ever.

## VII. LOSS OF FRIENDS.



THOU art very impatient, because thy friend Flaccus is deceased, yet will I not that thou subject thyself to disordinate sorrow. I dare not ask this at thy hands, that thou shouldest not grieve, yet know I this, that it would be better not to do so. But to whom is given so firm a constancy of mind, save to him who hath trodden fortune under his feet? Nevertheless, him also would this thing trouble and prick. Yet it would go no further. We too may be pardoned if we have fallen into tears, provided that they be not over lavish, and that we have repressed them. At the loss of a friend neither let our eyes be dry, nor streaming; we must shed tears, but put aside lamentations. Supposest thou that I subject thee to a rigorous law? Remember that the greatest poet amongst the Greeks put a limit of one day to tears, in that passage where he says that Niobe also bethought her of her meat. Wilt thou know from whence those complaints and immeasurable tears proceed? By tears we seek to prove that we loved them, and we do not give way to grief, but make it visible. No man is sad to himself. What nonsense it is! Grief, too, hath its ambitions. "What, then," sayest thou, "shall I forget my friend?" It is but a short remembrance thou promisest him, if it is to continue no longer than thy grief. Some chance trifle will suddenly change the wrinkles of thy brow into smiles.

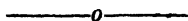
I am not speaking of lapse of time, which will calm and allay the greatest sorrows of this world, and make an end of the most bitter griefs. As soon as thou shalt cease to flatter and nourish thy grief, the very appearance of sadness will forsake thee. Now makest thou thy sorrow a prisoner; but howsoever close thy watch may be, it will escape from thee, and the sooner, the keener it is. Above all things, let us labour that the recalling to memory of our friends which we lose be agreeable and pleasing unto us. No man taketh pleasure to recall that whereon he cannot think without torment. Notwithstanding, if it cannot but be that the name of our friend, whom we have lost, may be recalled to our memory without some tinge of sorrow, that very tinge itself hath some pleasure in it. For as our Attalus was wont to say, "The memory of our deceased friends is pleasing unto us, no otherwise than as the bitter-sweetness of some apples, and the very tang of old wine; but when a little time hath elapsed, all that which tormented us is extinguished, and a purer pleasure succeedeth in our minds." If we will give ear unto him, and think that our friends are safe, why, it is to eat honey and cakes, so pleasant is it. The memory of those that are deceased can yield no joy but that which is tinged with some little bitterness. Still, who can deny that these bitter things, and such as have in them a spice of severity, are in their own way delicacies. For all this, am I not of that opinion. The remembrance of my friends that are deceased is agreeable and pleasing to me; for whilst they were here

I cherished them as if I was to lose them, and now I have lost them, I can cherish them still. Therefore, Lucilius, do that which thy discretion requireth. Forbear to give an evil interpretation to the benefits of fortune; true, she took away, but it was she, too, who gave them. Let us cherish our friends tenderly, because we know not whether they are to abide with us a long time or no. Let us reflect upon the many times we have left them to go upon some long voyage, and how often, even when living in the same place, we have not seen them, and we shall see that we lost more of their company when they were alive. But canst thou endure those that make no reckoning and account of their friends so long as they have them, but bewail them when they are gone most miserably, and never love any but when they have lost him?—and to this end weeping abundantly, because they are afraid lest it should grow in doubt whether they loved them or no. Thus seek they to bear witness to their feelings. If we have other friends, we slight them, and express an evil opinion of them, to think that they are not equivalent to the one whom we have lost; and if we have none, we do ourselves greater wrong than we have received at fortune's hands. She hath only taken one from us, but we have not made any. Again, he could scarce have loved one who cannot love but one. If a man were robbed, and lost the only coat that he had, and then would rather bewail his misfortune than bethink him by what means he might escape the cold and find something to cover his shoulders, wouldst thou not



esteem him a fool? Thou hast buried him thou lovest; seek now another whom thou mayest love. It is better to get a new friend than to bewail an old one. I know well that the advice which I am offering is very trite; yet I will not cease to give it, though all the world hath said it. To him that by reason and counsel cannot make an end of his sorrow, time brings relief. Still, is it not most contemptible for a rational man to find no remedy but weariness for his sorrow? I had rather thou left thy sorrow than that thy sorrow left thee. Desist from doing that as soon as thou canst, which, even if thou wouldst, thou canst not do for long. Our fathers limited a woman's mourning to the term of a year, not that they should mourn so long, but should mourn no longer. For a man no time is proper, because no time is right. Howbeit, which of these women, who could scarcely be dragged from the pile, whereon her husband was burnt, or haled from his dead body,—which one, canst thou show me, whose mourning has continued for a whole month? Nothing groweth more soon into hatred than grief, which, being fresh, we console and give solace unto it, but, being inveterate, we deride; and not without cause, for either it is feigned, or it is foolish. These things write I unto thee—I, who so immeasurably bewailed Annæus Serenus, my dear friend, as to draw upon myself the reproach of being one of those whom sorrow hath overcome. But at this present time I condemn mine own action, and thoroughly perceive that the cause of my excessive grief was, that I never reflected that he

could die before me. I thought only that he was younger, far younger than I was, as if the destinies called us in the order of our birth. Let us, therefore, meditate, as well on our own mortality as on theirs whom we love. Then should I have said, "True, my Serenus is younger. What, however, is this to the purpose? He ought to die after me, but he may, on the other hand, die before me." Because I thought not hereupon, fortune, surprising me on the sudden, struck me thus. Now I am perpetually reminding myself that all things are not only mortal, but that the date of their mortality is uncertain. Whatever can be done at all can be done to-day. Let us think, too, Lucilius, that we shall quickly go there where we so grievously mourn that he has gone; and, happily (if the opinion of wise men is truth, and there is some place prepared to receive us), he whom we suppose to have perished, is but sent before.



## VIII. CONSOLATIONS AGAINST OLD AGE.



N which side soever I turn myself I perceive the proofs of mine old age. I repaired lately to my country house, which adjoineth the city, and complained of my daily expense in reparations, and my bailiff that had the keeping thereof answered me that it was not his fault, alleging that he had

done the best that he could, but that the building was over old and ruinous; yet, notwithstanding it was I myself that builded it, I leave it to thee to judge of me, since the stones of mine age decay so much through antiquity. Being touched herewith, I took occasion to be displeased with him upon every first thing that encountered me in my walk. It well appeareth, said I, that these plane trees are not well laboured; they are altogether leafless, their boughs are knotty and withered, and their stocks covered with moss and filthiness. This would not happen if any man had digged about them and watered them as they ought to be. He sweareth by my genius that he doth his uttermost endeavours, and that he hath not neglected them in any manner, but that the trees are old. Then remembered I myself that I had planted them with mine own hands, and seen them bear their first leaf. Turning myself to the door, What decrepit fellow is that, said I, that for his age is left at the gate as dead? Whence came he? What pleasure hast thou to carry forth the carcass of a strange man. Knowest thou me not, saith he? I am Felicio, to whom thou wert wont to bring childish gifts. I am the son of thy bailiff Philositus, thy play-fellow. Undoubtedly, said I, this man doteth. My darling, then, is become an infant; undoubtedly it may be so, for he is almost toothless. This owe I to my farm, that my old age appeareth to me which way soever I turn myself. Let us, then, embrace and love the same; it is wholly replenished with agreeable delights, if a man know how to make use of it. The

apples are never so good as when they begin to wither and ripen. Infancy is most agreeable in the end thereof. To those that delight in carousing, the last draught is most pleasant, that which drowneth him in wine and consummateth his drunkenness. Whatsoever is most contenting in pleasure she deferreth till the end. The age that declineth is also most agreeable when as yet it is not wholly decrepit and spent; neither judge I that age without its particular pleasure, whose foot is almost in the grave, for then succeedeth in place of pleasure the sense of needing none. 'Oh, how sweet and pleasant a thing it is to see a man's self discharged of all covetousness! But thou mayest say that it is a tedious thing to have death always before a man's eyes: first of all, this ought as well to be presented to a young as to an old man's eyes; for we are not called by the Censor according to our estate, and there is none so old that hopeth not to live at least one day longer; and one day is a degree of life, for all our age consisteth of many parts, and is a circle that hath divers other circles, the one inclosed within the other. And one there is that incloseth and comprehendeth all the rest, which is that of life unto death; another that excludeth the years of youth, another that containeth all childhood. After these succeedeth the year which incloseth all, the time by the multiplication whereof life is composed. In the circle of the year is the month, and in that of the month is the day, which is the least of all; yet, notwithstanding, it hath its beginning and its end, its rise and its set. We

ought to dispose of every day in such sort as if it did lead up the rearward of our time : and should consummate our lives. If God vouchsafe us the next morrow, let us receive the same with thanksgiving. He is thrice happy, and assuredly possessed of himself, that expecteth the next day without care. Whosoever hath said, *I have lived*, doth daily rise to his profit. But, now, I must close my letter. What, sayest thou, shall it come to me without any present ? Do not fear, it shall bring somewhat with it. Why said I somewhat ? It will be a great deal, for what can be more excellent than this sentence it bringeth thee ?—"It is an evil thing to live in necessity, but there is no necessity to live in necessity, for the way that leadeth unto liberty is on every side open, short, and easy to keep." Let us give God thanks for this, that no man can be constrained to live, and that it is lawful for every one to tread necessity under his feet. Thou wilt say that these words are of Epicurus. What hast thou to do with another man's ? That which is true is mine. I will persevere to urge Epicurus unto thee, that they who swear and consent to the words, and consider not what is spoken, but by whom, let them know that those things are best that are common.

## IX. ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

(I.)



**I**T shall profit very much to have our children well instructed in the beginning. But the manner of governing is difficult, because we must endeavour that we nourish not anger or dull and damp their spirits. The matter had need of diligent observation. For both that which is to be extolled and that which is to be depressed is nourished with the like, and such things as resemble, do oftentimes deceive him that is most diligent. The mind increaseth by liberty, and is abased by servitude. Praise the mind, and it rouseth itself, and is filled with great expectation; yet both these two expedients engender insolence and wrath. So, therefore, is he to be governed between both, that sometimes we use a bridle, sometimes a spur, that his mind may suffer nothing that is base and servile. Let him never have need to entreat anything humbly, neither let it profit him, though he hath so submissively entreated. If we grant him anything, let it be rather by alleging unto him that he hath just cause to demand the same, and that we have regard unto his former behaviour, and hope that he will do better hereafter, as he promiseth. In his exercises among his companions, let us neither suffer him to be overcome nor be angry. Let us endeavour that he may be always familiar with those with whom he is wont to contend, and that in his exercises he may

accustom himself not to have a will to hurt, but to overcome. As oft as he hath gotten the upper hand, or hath done anything that is praiseworthy, let tis not suffer him to be proud, or to boast thereof, for boasting followeth joy and pride and too much esteem of himself. We will give him some recreation, yet will we never suffer him to be slothful or idle, and above all things will detain him from the touch of pleasure. For nothing more enkindleth wrath than an over-delicate and dainty education, and therefore, the only child, to whom we give liberty, and those pupils that are left to their own pleasures, are ordinarily the most corrupted. The child that hath had his will in everything, whose mother hath ordinarily dried the tears from his eyes, who hath had a master assigned him according to his own fancy, will never suffer an injury patiently. Seest thou how every greater fortune is attended with greater anger? This appeareth in rich men; in noble men, in magistrates; whereas whatsoever vanity and levity was in their brains, findeth a fit wind to carry it away. Felicity nourisheth wrath as soon as the troops of flatterers are encamped about proud men. They will say unto thee, "What shall he answer thee? thou respectest not thyself according to the greatness of thy estate, thou abusest thyself over much;" and other such like, sufficient to entangle the wisest hearts, and such as have been prudently brought up from their infancy. Let childhood, therefore, be far removed from flattery. Let the child hear nothing but truth; let him learn fear, modesty, obedience to his

elders, and duty, and reverence. Let him extort nothing from thee by frowardness. That which was denied him when he wept, let it be given him when he is quiet. Let him see his parents' riches, but not use them. Let him be reproved for his evil deeds.

## (II.)

It shall be to the purpose to give children such masters and attendants as are peaceable and gentle. That which is tender layeth hold on that which is nearest unto it, and groweth with it and becometh like unto it. Divers children that have grown in years have represented the manners of their nurses and masters. A young child brought up with Plato returneth home to his parents' house, and hearing his father exclaim and chide grievously, said, "I have never seen the like with Plato." I doubt not that he imitated his father before he imitated Plato. And for a child's diet, let it be always slender. Let his attire be modest and answerable to that of his equals. He shall never be angry that any is compared with him, whom from the beginning thou hast made equal with many.



## X. HOW TO BEHAVE TOWARDS SERVANTS.



HAVE heard a good deal from those that come from thee, that thou livest familiarly with thy servants: this becometh thy prudence, this is answerable to thy wisdom. Are they servants? nay, they are men. Are they servants? nay, they are members of the same household. Are they servants? nay, rather, humble friends if not fellow-servants, if thou thinkest that fortune hath as much power over thee as over them. I therefore laugh at those that think it a disgrace to sup with their servants: for what is their reason? Nothing more than that overweening custom, which hath environed the supping-lord with a troop of attending servants. Far more eateth he than he digesteth, and with great greediness loadeth he his stomach, which can no longer perform its task; but his unhappy servants may not move their lips, even to speak. Every murmur is quieted by the rod, and not even mere accidents, such as a cough, a sneeze, or a hiccup, are exempt from blows; a great fine is imposed if by a word silence be interrupted; the whole livelong night there they stand fasting and mute. So cometh it to pass, that these speak behind their lord's back, who may not speak in his presence. But they who have liberty not only to speak in their masters' presence, but to confer with them, whose lips are not sealed, are ready to hazard their lives for their masters, and to take imminent peril

upon their own shoulders. True, they speak at the dinner party, but when tortured, they hold their tongues. Besides, is it not from a like arrogancy that the proverb cometh, "So many servants, so many enemies?" They do not come as our enemies, but we make them so. In the mean space, I let pass many cruel and inhuman things, wherein we abuse them, not only as men, but as beasts. That whereas we lie at full length at the supper table, we have one to wipe away our spittings, another to crouch under the table and see to the mess made by the drunkards; a third to carve the costliest fowls, and cut them in pieces by conveying his dext hand through their breasts and backbones, in certain conceits of carving. Unhappy he that liveth only for this, namely, to carve wild-fowl neatly, save that he is more so who teacheth this for pleasure's sake than he that learneth it from necessity. Another, dressed as a woman, handeth the wine; then there is one who serveth as the butt of the party; to say nothing of the cooks, who have a certain subtle knowledge of the master's palate, who know what meat tickleth his appetite best, what most affecteth his eye, what meat will quicken his loathing stomach, what he will eat that day. With these he cannot abide to sup, and thinketh it beneath his dignity to sit down at the same table with his servant. Wilt thou not think that he whom thou termost thy servant was born of the same seed, enjoyeth the same air, and breatheth, liveth, and dieth as thou shalt? Thou mayest see just as much of the gentleman in him as he can see of the servant in thee. How many

men did fortune depress in the Marian persecution such as were of noble birth, and after being thrice tribunes were about to become senators? One of these persecution made a shepherd, another a keeper of a cottage. Condemn not the man of that fortune, into which thou mayest be transferred whilst thou condemnest. I will not intrude myself into a large field of discourse and dispute of the use of servants, in respect of whom we are most cruel, proud, and despiteful. This is the sum of my discourse. So live with thine inferior as thou wouldst thy superior should live with thee. As often as thou bethinkest thyself what power thou hast over thy servant, bethink thyself that so much power thy master hath over thee. But I, sayest thou, have no master. Thou art young; happily thou shalt have hereafter. Knowest thou not how old Hecuba was when she went to service, how old Croesus was, how old Darius's mother was, how old Plato was, how old Diogenes? Live with thy servant kindly and courteously; admit him to thy discourse, thy counsel, thy board. The whole of the polite world will here cry out at me, There is nothing more degrading, nothing more disgraceful, than to do so. These very same men I find kissing other men's servants. Seest thou not, likewise, how by this means our fathers took envy of their masters from the servants, and all contumely from the masters' mouths? They called their lord their father; he called his servants boys. They instituted a holiday, wherein not only the masters feasted with their servants, but, beside that, awarded them the place of honour in the house,

permitted them to give sentence and judgment, and their house to be a little commonwealth. What then? Shall I set all my servants at my table? Certainly no other than all my children. Thou errest if thou thinkest that I will reject some of them as of too servile an office, as, for instance, my muleteer and cowherd. I will not measure them by their tasks but by their manners. Each one giveth himself manners, casualty assigneth him tasks. Let some of them sup with thee because they are worthy, some that they may become so. For if anything be servile in them by reason of their sordid conversation, living and conversing with those that are better nurtured will shake it off. Thou art not, Lucilius, to seek thy friend in the market-place and in the court only. If thou diligently attendest, thou shalt find him in thy house also. Oftentimes good material is wasted without an artist; try and make the experiment. Even as he is a fool who, having a horse to buy, looketh not on him but on his harness and bit; so is he most foolish that esteemeth a man either by his garment or by his condition, which is wrapped about us as it were a garment. Is he a servant? Still, perchance, he is a free man in mind. Is he a servant? shall this hurt him? Show me one that is not. One serveth his lust, another his avarice, another ambition, another fear. I will show thee a man that hath been consul serving an old woman. I will let thee see a rich man serving a poor maid. I will show thee the noblest young men the very bond-slaves of actresses. There is no servitude so foul as that which

is voluntary. For which cause there is no reason that these dainty folk should deter thee from showing thyself affable to thy servants, and not proudly superior. Let them rather honour thee than fear thee. Will any man say that I call servants to liberty, and cast down masters from their dignity, in that I say they should rather honour their master than fear him? How, saith he, shall they honour thee?—as clients and courtiers? He that saith thus, forgetteth that that which is too little for masters is quite enough for God, who is both worshipped and loved. Love cannot be mingled with fear. I, therefore, think thou doest most uprightly, in that thou wilt not be feared by thy servants, that thou usest the chastisement of words. Only such as are dumb are admonished by stripes. It is not everything that offendeth us which hurteth us. But daintiness compelleth us to outrage, so that whatsoever is not answerable to our will provoketh us to wrath. We put upon us the minds of kings, for they too, forgetful of their own strength and other men's weakness, are as incensed and as wrathful as if they had received an injury, whereas the greatness of their fortune secureth them most from any such thing; neither are they ignorant hereof, but they search out occasions of hurting, they take an injury that they may do wrong. I will not detain thee longer, for thou hast no need of exhortation. Good manners have this amongst other things: they are not only pleasing but permanent. Badness is light, and is often changed, not into something better, but into something different.

## XI. TRUE NOBILITY.




ONCE again thou playest the coward with me, and suggestest that nature first, and after her fortune, have been contrary toward thee; whereas thou mayest raise thyself from the common sort, and obtain the most high felicity that may befall men. If aught be good in Philosophy, this it is, that it regardeth not nobility nor descent. If all men be called to their first original, they are of the gods. Thou art a Roman knight, and to this order thine industry hath advanced thee; but undoubtedly there are divers to whom the reserved seats at the theatre are closed. The court admitteth not all men, The camp, likewise, is very nice in making choice of those whom it entertaineth for labour and travail. A good spirit and intention is open to all men; in this we are all noble: neither doth Philosophy reject or elect any man, but shineth unto all. Socrates was no Patrician. Cleanthes drew water, and employed his hands in watering the garden. Philosophy entertained not Plato as a nobleman, but made him one. And what cause hast thou to despair, but that thou mayest be like unto these? All these were thine ancestors if thou behavest thyself worthy of them, and so shalt thou behave and carry thyself, if thou persuade thyself that no man can outstrip thee in nobility. There have gone before us as many as we are, and the first original of all very far surpasseth our memory. Plato saith that

there is not any king that is not descended of a slave, and that there is not any slave that is not descended from kings. All these things hath long variety mingled together, and fortune hath turned topsy-turvy. Who is therefore the gentleman? He that is well composed by nature unto virtue. This only is to be regarded, otherwise, if thou recallest me to antiquity, every man is from thence before which nothing is. From the first beginning of this world unto this day, an alternate series of good and evil hath rendered us noble or base-born. It maketh not a nobleman to have his court full of smoky images; no man liveth for our glory, neither is that glory which was before us ours; the mind maketh the nobleman, which, from how base condition soever, enableth us to rise above fortune. Suppose, therefore, that thou wert no Roman knight, but a freed-man. Thou mayest attain this, that thou alone mayest be a free man amongst the well-born. But how? sayest thou. If thou distinguish not good and evil by people's judgments. We must regard, not whence they come, but whither they go. For if there be anything may make the life happy, it is absolutely good, because it may not be turned into evil. Where is it, then, wherein we err? In this, that all who affect a happy life take the instruments thereof for the thing itself, and whilst they seek the same, fly the same; for whereas solid security is the sum of a blessed life, and the unshaken confidence arising therefrom, they gather the causes of solicitude, and throughout the dangerous journey of life they

not only bear but draw the burdens of life. Thus always recoil they far from the effect of that they seek, and the more labour they employ, the more are they entangled and carried backward, which happeneth to those that haste them in a labyrinth—their very speed entangleth them.

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## XII. OF TRAVEL.

 HAVE fled unto my grange at Nomentanum; but why, thinkest thou? To shun the city? No; but the fever which began to seize upon me: nay had already laid hold on me. Forthwith, therefore, I commanded my coach to be made ready, although my wife Paulina were against it. My physician having felt my pulse, and finding the artery beating uncertainly and contrary to nature, said that it was the beginning of a fever. Yet, notwithstanding, I resolved myself to set forward, remembering me of a speech of my lord Gallio, who, being in Achaia, and feeling himself surprised with a fever, forthwith embarked himself, crying out that this sickness of his proceeded from the air of the country, and not from his body. This told I to my Paulina, who recommended my health to me. For since I know that her life is wrapped up in mine, for her health's sake I began to have a



care of my own, and at a time when old age hath fortified me against divers difficulties, this benefit of age I lose: remembering that in this old frame liveth a younger, which cannot too much be tendered. So, then, because I cannot require that my wife should love me more entirely than she doth, she hath begged so much at my hands, that now I cherish myself more tenderly than I otherwise did. For we must give way unto honest affections, and sometimes also, if urgent causes require it, our breath is to be retained in honour of our friends, though it be to our torment, as it were between our teeth, because a virtuous man is bound to live, not as long as he liketh, but as long as he ought. If that, without respect of his wife and friends, laboureth for naught else but to end his life, and demandeth death, is over-delicate. Let the soul have this commandment over herself (when the profit of those to whom she is obliged requireth the same), not only to shun death, against her own wishes, but likewise when she is upon the point to dislodge and leave the body, to re-enter again, to the end she may be enabled to do her friends service. It is the argument of a great mind to return unto life for others' profit, as divers great men have many times done. And this also esteem I to be a great humanity, to maintain old age attentively (the fairest fruit whereof consisteth in maintenance of her health, and in living more orderly than is accustomed), if thou knowest that to be a thing either pleasant, profitable, or wished for of any of thy friends. Moreover, there is a great joy and profit therein. For what

greater contentment may there be than to be so dearly beloved by a man's wife, that for that cause thou shouldst become more loving to thyself? My Paulina, therefore, is able not only to impute her fear unto me, but mine also. Demandest thou, therefore, what success my determination of going into the country had? As soon as I had gotten out of the heavy air of Rome, and from the stink of the smoky chimneys thereof, which, being stirred, poured forth whatsoever pestilent vapours and soot they held enclosed in them, I felt an alteration of my disposition. How much, thinkest thou, was my strength increased when I came unto my grange? No sooner entered I the meads but I began to rush upon my meat with a strong appetite. Thus, therefore, have I for the present recovered myself. The littleness of my ailing and ill-disposed body is vanished, and I begin to study diligently. The place yields little furtherance thereunto, if the mind be not assistant to itself, which, amidst all affairs and troubles, may have, if it will, a place of retirement. But he that maketh choice of the place, and seeketh after ease, shall everywhere find enough to disturb him. For it is reported that Socrates (hearing a certain man complain that he had lost his time in travelling here and there) returned this answer, "Not without cause hath this befallen thee, for thou travellest with thyself." Oh, how happy would divers men be, if they could wander from themselves. As it is, they are the first to solicit, corrupt, and terrify themselves. What availeth it them to pass the seas, and to change cities?

If thou wouldest flee these things wherewith thou art oppressed, thou needest not to be in another place, but be another man. But suppose thou wert come to Athens, or to Rhodes; choose what city thou pleasest. What skilleth it what manners they have? thou shalt carry thither thine own. Are riches, in thine opinion, the supreme good? Then is it poverty (yea, the appearance and presumption thereof, which is a lamentable opinion) which shall incessantly torture thee. For although thou possessest much, yet because another man hath more, thou shalt seem unto thyself by so much the poorer by how much the other is more rich. Or supposest thou it is honours that are the supreme good? Then shall it grieve thee that such a man is made consul, and that such a man hath twice enjoyed the office; it shall vex thee when thou shalt find on the roll of fame any man's name oftener than thine own. So great shall the fury of thine ambition be, that if anyone shall outstrip thee, thou wilt not think that any marcheth behind thee. Wilt thou suppose death to be an extreme evil? when, in fact, there is nothing evil in it, but the fear which is before it. Then will not only dangers, but the suspicion of them, terrify thee. Thou shalt be incessantly tormented with dreams and shadows, for what shall it profit thee, as saith the poet, to have evaded so many Grecian towns, and made thy way by flight through the midst of thine enemies? Peace itself shall affright thee. As soon as thy mind shall be shaken, thou shalt noways trust those things that are most assured. For as soon as the mind hath gotten

accustomed to entertain improvident fear, thou art no more disposed to entertain any repose or contentment in thyself. For she shunneth not, but flieth from the stroke; and if we turn our backs to affliction, it has greater holdfast on us. Thou wilt judge it a grievous evil to lose any of those friends thou hast loved, whereas it is at least as great folly to bewail them as to weep because the leaves of thy fair, shadowy trees, which adorn thy house, are fallen and shaken to the ground. A tree may be alive, though leafless, and so may thy friend, though he be not present. To-day, death will carry off the leaves, to-morrow, thy friend. But as we suffer patiently the fall and loss of the leaves of our trees, because they will spring again, so oughtest thou to endure the loss of thy friends, whom thou imaginest to be the joys of thy life, because they shall be restored, although they be not as yet born again. But they shall not be such as they were whilst they remained in this world; neither shalt thou thyself be the same. Every day, every hour changeth thee, but in others the ruin appeareth more easily. Here it lieth hidden, because it is not done openly. Others are snatched away before our eyes, but we ourselves are stolen secretly away. Wilt thou think of none of these things? Wilt thou apply no remedies to these wounds, but be handmaid unto thyself, carrying the causes of thy cares, by hoping some things and despairing others? If thou art wise, mix the one with the other; neither hope thou without desperation, neither despair without hope. What can travel profit any man of itself? It

tempereth not pleasures, it bridleth not desires, it pacifieth not displeasures, it breaketh not the untamed assaults of love. To conclude, it disburdeneth the mind of no evil, neither giveth judgment, nor shaketh off error; but detaineth the mind for a short time, and entertaineth it with novelty of things, as children stand and gaze when they behold anything which they have not seen. To conclude, this going and coming doth no more but make the inconstant thought more light and stirring, which at last attesteth itself in in such sort, that they who are the first to come to any place are also the first to go, like birds of passage, flying thence more swiftly than they came thither. Travel will give thee knowledge of nations, will show thee the new forms of mountains, the spacious and unaccustomed plains, the valleys watered with running rivers, some flood that hath a certain notable property—such as the Nile, which increaseth in summer; or Tigris, which loseth itself, and then, having made a long circuit under the earth, re-entereth its channel, and reneweth its swift and spacious course as before; or how Meander (the exercise and play of all poets) maketh an infinite number of turns and re-turns, that oftentimes she seemeth to discharge herself from her channel and to stream towards the bed of her neighbour floods, yet anon returneth. But such voyages will never make thee more healthy or wise. We must pass our lives amongst studies and amongst the authors of wisdom, that we may learn that which we desire to know, and seek out that which is as yet unfound. By this means must the mind be redeemed from miserable servitude,

and set at liberty. As long as thou shalt be ignorant of that which thou shouldst fly or follow, of that which is necessary and superfluous, of that which is just and honest, thou canst never be said to travel, but only to err. This turmoil will comfort thee nothing, for thou wanderest accompanied by thy affections, and thy evils follow thee. Would to God they might follow thee, then were they farther from thee. Now thou bearest them on thy back—thou leadest them not; for which cause they every way weigh thee down, and scar thee with the same distresses. It is medicine, and not a place, that a rich man wants. Hath anyone broken his leg or put a member out of joint? he gets not to his coach, he embarks not in his ship, but calleth for a physician, to the end he may unite that which was broken, and set the joint in its place that was dislocated. To what end, then, thinkest thou, that by changing thy country thou mayest heal thy bruised and broken mind in so many places? This evil is more great than to be cured by being carried hither and thither. Travel neither maketh a physician nor an orator. There is neither art nor science that is learnt by changing place in this sort. What then? Is not wisdom, which is the greatest treasure of all others, learnt in travel? Trust me, there is no journey that may retire thee apart from thy desire, thy displeasures, and thy fears; or, if there were any, all mankind by troops would travel and flock thither. So long will these evils press thee and tear thee whilst thou wanderest by land and sea, as thou bearest

the causes of thine evils in thee. Wonderest thou at this, that thy flight profitest thee nothing? Why, man, the things thou fleest are with thee. Mend thyself, therefore, and shake off thy burdens, and at leastwise contain thy desires within compass. Root all wickedness out of thy mind; if thou wilt have thy travels delightful, heed thy companion. Avarice will cling unto thee as long as thou livest with a covetous and base companion. Pride will cleave unto thee as long as thou conversest with a proud man. Thou wilt never lay aside thy cruelty in a hangman's company. The fellowship of adulterers will enkindle thy lusts. If thou wilt be discharged of vices, thou must retire thyself afar off from all evil examples. Avarice, dissoluteness, cruelty, fraud (such enemies that, approaching thee, will wound thee grievously) are within thee. Acquaint thyself with the better sort—live with such as Cato, Lælius, and Tubero were; and if thou take a liking to live amongst the Grecians, converse with Socrates and Zeno—the one will teach thee how to die, if it be needful, the other how to die before it be needful. Live with Chrysippus and Posidonius—these will teach thee the knowledge of divine and human things; these will command thee to put in practice that which thou hast learned, and not to content thyself with a polished tongue, which tickleth the ears of the hearers, but to fortify thy heart, and to confirm it to confront evil chances. For the only part of this troubled and turbulent life is to condemn those things that may happen, to remain resolute, to oppose a naked

bosom against all the darts of adversity, without playing the coward or fleeing. Nature hath created us valiant; and as to some creatures she hath given a fierce spirit, to some a subtle, to other some a fearful, so hath she given us a glorious and high spirit, that seeketh where it may live most honestly, not most securely; even as the gods above, whom, so far as human frailty will give it leave, it followeth and counterfeiteth. It seeketh nothing but praise, and desireth to be seen. It is the lord of all things and above all things. It therefore submitteth itself to nothing—nothing seemeth heavy unto it—nothing that may make a man stoop.

“Travail and death are ugly to behold.”

Not so, if a man might behold them clearly, and break through the darkness. Many things that have been esteemed dreadful by night have proved trifles and jesting sports by day.

“Travail and death are ugly to behold,”—

worthily wrote our Virgil. He sayeth that they were not terrible in deed but in semblance; that is, they seem so to be, but are not. What is there, say I, in these so dreadful as fame hath reported them? What is there, I pray thee, Lucilius, that a man should fear either labour or death? Yet meet I with those men that think all that impossible which they cannot do, and say that we speak greater matters than human nature may sustain or effect. But how much better an opinion have I of them. They also can do these things, but they will not. To conclude: whom



have these precepts ever failed that have deigned to make use of them, who found them not more easy in action than in instruction? It is not because they are difficult that we dare not; but because we dare not, they are difficult. Yet, if you require an example, behold Socrates, that most patient man, tossed in so many dangers, invincible in poverty, with his domestic burdens made more grievous and cumbersome, invincible in those labours he suffered in war, and wherewith at home he was daily exercised; whether you consider his wife, fierce in manners and froward in tongue, or his rebellious and disobedient children, more like their mother than their father. So for the most part he either was in war or in tyranny, or in a liberty more cruel than wars or tyrannies. Seven-and-twenty years he bare arms, and having laid them aside, he saw his city enthralled under thirty tyrants, of which the most part of them were his enemies. The last of these misfortunes is the condemnation urged against him for most heinous crimes. Violating of religion is objected against him, and the corruption of youth, which he was said to practise in spite of the gods, parents, and the commonweal. After all this, his prison and poison. So far were these things from moving Socrates' mind, that they never moved his countenance; he maintained his wonderful and singular reputation unto his dying day. No man saw Socrates either more merry or more sad, and he continued equable in so great inequality of fortune. Wilt thou have another example? Take Cato of Utica, with whom fortune dealt more cruelly

and more obstinately, which he withstood whilst in all places, and last of all in his death. Yet gave he example that a confident and valiant man may live and die in spite of fortune. All his lifetime was spent in civil war; so that thou mayest say that this man, no less than Socrates, spent his life in servitude. There was no man that ever saw Cato changed in a commonweal so oftentimes changed; in all occurrences he showed himself firm—in his prætorship, in his repulse, in his accusation, in his province, in his speeches, in the army, in his death; finally, in the trepidation of the commonweal: whereas on the one side Cæsar had trusted his fortunes to ten valiant legions, while Pompey relied on the forces of so many foreign nations. When some inclined unto Cæsar and some unto Pompey, Cato only maintained levied armies for common liberty. If thou wouldst imagine in thy mind the image of that time, thou shalt see on the one side the people, with listening ear, hearkening after nothing but novelty; on the other side nothing but the senators and knights, and whatsoever were either holy or chosen in the city; two only left in the midst—the Commonweal and Cato. Thou wouldst wonder, say I, if thou should'st observe

“Atreides grave and Priamus the old,  
And Trojan's greatest fear, Achilles bold.”

For he condemneth both, and disarmeth both; and this is his opinion of both: he saith, if Cæsar prevail, he will die; if Pompey, he will be banished. What hath he to fear who hath decreed that against

himself, either if he happened to be conqueror or conquered, which might have been decreed by his most bitter enemies? he died, therefore, by his own decree. Seest thou that men can suffer labours? He led his armies on foot through the midst of the deserts of Africa. Seest thou that they may endure thirst? Leading the remainder of his conquered army along the desert hills, without any baggage, he suffered the want of drink, being sweltered in his armour, and as often as occasion offered him water he was the last to drink. Seest thou that honour and authority may be contemned? The same day he was repulsed from the office he stood for, the same day played he at ball in the market-place. Seest thou that great men's power may not be feared? He opposed himself against Pompey and Cæsar at one time; the one of which no man durst offend, except it were to win the favour of the other. Seest thou that death may be as well contemned as banishment? He both pronounced exile and death against himself, and in the interim war. We may then have the same resolution against all accidents; provided that we take a pleasure to discharge our necks of the yoke. First of all, therefore, pleasures are to be despised, for they weaken, disable, demand much, and much is to be required at fortune's hands. After these, riches are to be despised, which are the recompenses of servitude. Let gold and silver, and what else soever loadeth happy houses with care, be let alone. Liberty is not bought for nothing: if thou highly prize her, thou must misprize and neglect all the rest.

## XIII. LIBERAL EDUCATION.



THOU desirest to know my opinion of liberal studies. Of those things whose end is gain I admire none, I number none amongst those things that be good. Handicrafts may be profitable, nay, even useful, if they prepare, but do not engross, the mind. For we must exercise ourselves therein only so long as the mind can perform nothing greater; they must be our essays, not our works. Thou seest why certain are called liberal studies, because they be worthy of a free man. But one study there is which is liberal indeed, namely, that which maketh a free man. Such is the study of wisdom, which is an high, valiant, and magnanimous thing; other things be petty and childish. Believest thou that there can be anything good in these things, the professors whereof thou seest to be the most dishonest and the most wicked men? These things we ought not to learn, but to have learned. Some have thought fit to propound this question concerning liberal studies, whether they can make a good man. They do not so much as promise it, neither affect they the knowledge thereof. A grammarian occupies himself with the care of speech, or, if he takes a wider view of his art, possibly with history. The most that he can do is to extend its limits, so as to include poetry. Which of these openeth a way to virtue? Doth the unfolding of syllables, the niceties of speech, the memory of fables,

or the law and syntax of verses? Which of these taketh away fear, casteth out covetousness, bridleth lust? Let us pass to geometry and music: nothing shalt thou find in them which forbiddeth fear, or forbiddeth covetousness, of which, whosoever is ignorant, in vain knoweth other things. Let us see whether they teach virtue, or not. If they teach it not, they do not so much as foster it; if they teach it, they be philosophers. Wouldest thou know how they have conspired not to teach virtue? Behold how diverse the studies of all of them be, whereas likeness had existed had they taught the same things. Peradventure they persuade thee to conclude that Homer was a philosopher, although they deny it in the very premises by which they reach this conclusion; for sometimes they make him a Stoic, allowing of virtue alone, and flying from pleasures, and receding not from that which is virtuous, not even for the reward of immortality itself. At other times they make him an Epicurean, praising the state of a quiet city, and passing his life amongst banquets and songs. Next he appears as a Peripatetic, expatiating on the three kinds of goods, and lastly, as an Academic, teaching that all things are uncertain. It appeareth that he is none of these things, because all be in him, for these things are mutually destructive. But let us grant unto them that Homer was a philosopher: in that case he must have learnt wisdom before he wrote poetry; wherefore, let us learn those things which made Homer a wise man. For me to make inquiry after this, whether Homer or Hesiod were the elder,

is no more to the purpose than to know whether Hecuba was younger than Helen, and, if so, why she bore her years so badly. What supposest thou that it profiteth to inquire into the ages of Patroclus and Achilles? Seekest thou rather Ulysses' errors than seekest how thou canst prevent thine own? There is no time for hearing whether Ulysses was shipwrecked between Italy and Sicily, or passed the boundaries of the known world, for so great a wandering could not have been in so narrow a place. Tempests of the mind do daily toss us, and vice driveth us into all the evils which Ulysses suffered. Beauty there is to beguile the eyes, and she cometh not in the guise of a foe: hence come cruel monsters, which delight in men's blood; hence come deceitful allurements of the ears; hence shipwrecks, and so many varieties of evil. Teach me this thing, how I may love my country, my wife, and my father; how even, suffering shipwreck, I may steer my ship into so virtuous an haven. Why askest thou whether Penelope was unchaste, whether she deceived her age, whether she thought him, whom she saw, to be Ulysses before she knew him to be so? Teach me what chastity is, and how great a good there is in it, whether it be placed in the body or in the mind. I pass to musicians. Thou teachest me how there cometh an harmony from sharp and bass sounds, and how a chord may be composed of dissonant strings. Do thou make rather that my mind may be in harmony with itself, and that my counsels be not out of time. Thou shewest unto me what be the mournful measures; shew me, rather, how in adversity

I may utter no mournful word. The geometrician teacheth me to survey; rather let him teach me how I may survey the measure of a man's life. Arithmetic teacheth me to number, and to lend my fingers unto covetousness; rather let it teach me that these computations profit me nothing. He is not a happier man whose patrimony wearie the accountants; nay, how many superfluities must he not possess. How unhappy is he that is constrained to reckon up how much he hath. What profiteth it me to know how to divide a small field into parts, if I know not how to share it with my brother? What profiteth it subtilely to know how many feet there are in an acre, and if anything hath escaped the measuring-rod? if a powerful neighbour maketh me sad, and encroacheth somewhat on that which is mine? Teachest thou me how I may lose nothing from my boundaries? I would learn how to lose them all, and smile. I am expelled, saith he, from land which my father and my grandfather held. What? Before thy grandfather, who was tenant of this ground? I will not say what man was tenant, but what people? Thereon hast thou not entered as a lord, but as a tenant too. Askest thou whose tenant thou art? Thine heirs, if thou hast good luck. Lawyers deny that there can be any prescription against the public; this which thou possessest is public, and belongeth, indeed, unto the human race. A notable art, indeed! Thou knowest how to measure what is round; nothing that thou receivest, of whatever shape, escapeth thy square: thou tellest the distance of the stars;

thou hast taken the measure of all things. If thou be a true artist, measure the mind of man; tell him how great it is, tell him, too, how little. Thou knowest what a straight line is; what profiteth it thee if thou art ignorant of what is crooked in life? I come now to him who boasteth in the knowledge of heavenly things.

“ Whither cold Saturn doth himself betake,  
And to what circles Cyllenius star doth make.”

What shall it profit to know this? Is it that I should be anxious when Saturn and Mars are in opposition, or when Mercury sets while Saturn is up? Rather I will learn this, that wheresoever they are, true prosperity cannot be changed. A continuous order of fate driveth them inevitably,—by set courses they retire. They either bring about or shadow forth the results of all things. But supposing they be the cause why everything falleth forth, what shall the knowledge of an unchangeable thing profit thee? or supposing they but shadow it forth, what skilleth it to provide for that which thou canst not avoid? Whether thou do know or not know these things, they shall come to pass.

“ On the swift sun, and stars that follow it,  
If that thou look in order as they fit,  
The issuing day will never thee deceive,  
Nor clear nights slights of foresight will bereave.”

Sufficiently and abundantly is it provided that I should be safe from ambushes. “Canst thou deny,”



saith one, "that to-morrow's hour deceiveth me?" It deceiveth in the sense that it cometh upon one that is ignorant thereof. I am ignorant of what shall actually be, but I know what may be; wherefore I despair nothing, I expect everything. If anything be remitted I account it as good luck. The hour deceiveth me if it spareth me; but not even thus doth it deceive me; for whereas I know that all things may fall forth, so also I know for certain that all things will not fall forth. Certainly I expect prosperity, but am prepared for adversity. Bear with me a little, while I consider certain spurious arts, for it is not my wont to count painters amongst the professors of the liberal arts, no more than makers of statues or workers in marble, or other ministers of luxury. Alike do I close the door of the liberal studies against wrestlers, and all the skill consisting in training, otherwise I should admit perfumers, and cooks, and others, that do apply their wits for our pleasure. For what liberal art, I pray thee, profess these tipplers, whose bodies be fat, but their minds lean and sleepy? Or do we believe this to be a liberal study for our youth, which our fathers approved, to shoot straight, to throw a spear, to sit a horse, to handle weapons deftly? Nothing did they teach their children that could be learned by the idle. But neither the one nor the other teacheth and nourisheth virtue; for what profiteth it to sit a horse, and with a bridle to check his course, if one is led away oneself by most unbridled affections? What profiteth it to be the victor at an hundred wrestling or boxing matches.

and to be conquered by anger? What then? Do liberal studies render us no assistance? In other things much, in virtue nothing; for these so-called arts, which depend upon dexterity, are a great assistance to the means of life, notwithstanding to virtue they do not belong. Why, therefore, do we instruct our children in liberal studies? Not because they can give virtue, but because they prepare the mind to the receiving of it. For just as the horn-book, as our fathers called it, whereby the elements were taught to children, teacheth not the liberal arts, but prepareth a place for the first receiving of them, so liberal arts lead not the mind to virtue, but make it fit therefore. Posidonius sayeth that there be four kinds of arts—the vulgar and base, the scenic, the childish, and the liberal. Vulgar be of craftsmen, which consist in dexterity, and be busied for the furnishing out of life, wherein there is no pretence to decency, nor of any virtuous end. The scenic arts be those which tend to the pleasure of the eyes and of the ears. To these you may number the mechanicians, who devise stages which rise up of themselves, floors which rise to a great height without shewing how, and other sudden surprises. Either those things dividing which were joined, those things which were divided joining of their own accord, or those things which rise by little and little, settling down again upon themselves. Silly people are stricken with wonder at these things, for sudden things always surprise them. Puerile are those which have some similitude to the true liberal arts, and are those which we commonly call

liberal arts. But they alone are the true liberal arts which have a care of virtue. For, saith he, just as some part of the mind is for natural, some for moral, and some for reasoning philosophy, so also this troop of liberal arts doth challenge a place unto itself in philosophy too. When we come to natural science we stand to the test of geometry. Is it a part of that which it helpeth? Many things help us, yet, for all that, they are no parts of us; yea, if they were parts, they would not help. Meat is an help of the body, yet it is not a part. The science of geometry performeth some service unto us; but it is only needful to philosophy as a carpenter is needful unto it; but, in truth, neither the carpenter is a part of geometry, nor geometry of philosophy. Furthermore, each have their ends, for a wise man both seeth and knoweth the causes of natural things, the numbers and measures whercof the geometrician afterwards taketh and counteth. A wise man knoweth after what manner heavenly things consist, what force, or what nature is in them; the mathematician collecteth the courses and returnings, and the observations by which they descend and be lifted up, and sometimes appear as though they stood still, whereas heavenly things cannot. A wise man knoweth what the cause is that reflecteth the image in a glass; the geometrician can tell that unto thee, how much a body ought to be distant from the image, and, given the form of the glass, what the image will be like. A philosopher will prove the sun to be great; how great, the mathematician will show, who proceedeth by

exercise and use ; but before he can proceed, certain axioms must be granted him. But that art is not an art in its own right whose foundation is upon hypothesis. Philosophy desireth no hypothesis ; it raiseth the whole structure, foundations and all. Mathematics, so to speak, are a superficial art ; it buildeth upon another's foundations, it receiveth its principles from others, by the benefit of which it cometh to further conclusions. If, by its own exertions, it could come to truth, if it could comprehend the nature of the whole world, I would be more grateful to it. The mind is made perfect by one thing—namely, by the unchangeable knowledge of good and bad things, for which alone philosophy is competent. But none other art enquireth about good and bad things. Let us consider all virtues in particular. Fortitude disdaineth fear ; such things as are terrible and enslave our liberty it despiseth, challengeth, and overcometh. In what way do liberal studies add strength to such a temper ? Fidelity is the holiest of all good things which abide in a human breast ;—necessity cannot coerce it to deceit, bribes cannot corrupt it. Burn me, saith it, beat me, kill me, I will not betray ; nay, the more thou shalt torture me to divulge secrets intrusted to me, the more deeply will I hide them. What are liberal studies able to do for such minds as these ? Temperance ruleth over pleasures : some it hateth and driveth away, others it dispenseth with and reduceth to an healthy mean, neither at any time doth it descend to them for their own sake. It knoweth that the best mean to place to

our desires is to take not as much as thou wilt, but as much as thou oughtest to. Humanity forbiddeth us to lord it over our fellows, or to be covetous ; in words, in deeds, in affections it showeth itself gentle and easy unto all ; it imputeth no evil to what is foreign to itself, but of its own goods it loveth that in especial which contributeth to another's welfare. Canst thou say that liberal studies are the masters of these manners ? Assuredly not ; no more than they are of simplicity, or modesty and moderation, or of frugality ; no more than they are of clemency, which spareth the blood of another, as if it were his own, and knoweth that a man must make no lavish use of man. " When ye say," saith one, " that without liberal studies virtue cannot be attained, how can ye deny that such things contribute nothing to virtue ? " In this way, without food virtue cannot be attained, and yet meat contributeth not to virtue. Wood contributeth nothing to a ship, although a ship cannot be made without wood. There is no reason, say I, why thou shouldst consider anything which is indispensable to something else as necessarily an assistance to it. We may go further, too, and say, that without liberal studies wisdom may be attained ; for although virtue is to be learned, it need not necessarily be learned by these means. What reason, then, is there for my thinking that an illiterate man cannot be wise when wisdom is not in letters ? It transmitteth deeds, not words ; and I cannot say whether that memory may not be more sure which hath no help outside of itself. Wisdom is both large

and spacious ; it hath need of an empty place ; we must learn things divine and human, things past and things to come, things temporary and things eternal, time itself, concerning which one thing, mark how much investigation is necessary ; for example, first, whether anything can be the cause of its own existence, then, whether anything can be before time ; if time began when the world began, or whether it existed before the world ; because somewhat there must have been, and therefore time was also. There are innumerable questions also concerning the mind : whence it came and what it is, when it beginneth to exist, how long it existeth ; whether it passeth from one place to another, and changeth its abode, cast from one animal form into another ; or whether it serveth no more than once, and being given up, wandereth in space ; whether it be a body or no, what it will do when it hath ceased to be under our control ; how it will use its liberty when it shall flee out of this prison ; whether it will forget former things, and then first begin to know on its own account, when, divorced from the body, it departeth on high. Of whatsoever part of divine and human affairs thou takest hold, thou shalt be wearied with the huge abundance of things to be sought out and to be learned. That this vast and great multitude of things may have free quarters, useless things are to be cast out of the mind. Virtue will not lodge itself in so narrow a room : a great matter desireth a large space ; let all also be driven out, let the whole breast be empty for it. But a pleasure there is which

cometh from the knowledge of many arts. Let us, therefore, retain such portion of them as is necessary. Thinkest thou him to be blameworthy who layeth in a store of useless things, and spreadeth abroad in his house a show of what is precious? and thinkest thou him not to be blameworthy who is occupied in the useless garnishments of learning? To wish to know more than enough is a sort of intemperance. Let alone that this affectation of liberal arts maketh men tiresome, verbose, crochety, pleasers of themselves, and averse to learning what is necessary, because they have already learned what is useless. Dydimus, the grammarian, wrote four thousand books; I should pity the man who read so much rubbish. In these books there are such questions debated as these—What was Homer's country? who was Æneas' real mother? whether Anacreon had a stronger taste for wine or women? whether Sappho was chaste? and other like matters, which, if thou didst know, thou shouldst unlearn. Go to, now, and say that life is not long. But even when thou shalt come to the men of our own country, I will show thee where the pruning-knife, nay, the axe, may be applied. Before thou canst attain the coveted title of man of letters, thou must incur great expense of time, and greatly trouble the ears of other folk. Let us be content with this less fashionable title, "Man of goodness." If not, then I will compile the chronicles of all nations, and search out who first wrote verses; I will compute what interval of time elapsed between Orpheus and Homer, even when I

have no records to guide me, and review the notes of Aristarchus, which he appended to the verses of other men; and in syllables will I wear out my life. And shall I thus stick in the dust of geometry? Hath that wholesome precept, "Save time," so fallen out of mind? Shall I know these things, and be ignorant of myself? Appion, the grammarian, who, under Caius Cæsar, travelled all Greece through, and received the freedoms of all cities in Homer's name, used to say that Homer, having finished his two works, the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, added a preface to his work, which embraced the Trojan war. The proof he adduced of this was because the initial letters of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been designedly adopted, and contained the number of his works. It is meet that those who would know much should know such things. Wilt thou not think how much time bad health may take from thee, how much public and private business, how much business by day, how much sleep. Measure thine age; it is not capable of so many things. I speak of liberal studies; how much of what is useless do philosophers possess, how much of what is unpractical. They also have descended to the distinction of syllables, and to the proprieties of conjunctions and prepositions, and to envy grammarians, to envy geometricians. Whatsoever was superfluous in the arts of them they translated into their own art. Thus it is come to pass, that with all their diligence, they know rather to speak than to live.



## XIV. THE EMPLOYMENT OF A QUIET LIFE.



IN such sort ought a man to seek out solitude, that wheresoever he remaineth in quiet he may desire that the vigour of his mind, his speech, and action may serve everyone in particular, and all in general.

For not only he alone serveth the commonwealth that produceth the candidates to sue for offices, that defendeth the accused, who giveth his advice as touching the affairs of peace and war, but also that other that instructeth youth; that in so great want of good manners informeth men's minds with virtue; that layeth hold on and restraineth those who are addicted to avarice and dissipation, or at least hindereth them from passing further; and who in his private house procureth the public good. Who doth more, either the judge in a city, that with his assistant pronounceth a brief sentence in a suit that strangers and citizens have before him, or he that teacheth what justice is, that sheweth what piety, wisdom, pureness, contempt of death are, and how excellent a spur a good conscience is? If, then, thou employest thy time in study, thou hast not lost those honours that are due to the execution of thy duty towards the public, neither shalt thou be deprived of the same. Neither is he only a soldier that standeth in the front of the battle, and defendeth both the right and left wings, but he also that guardeth the gates, and standeth sentinel in a place, though not so

dangerous, yet necessary, and keepeth his watch, that hath the government of the ammunition-house, which charges, though they be not bloody, yet have they that execute them their pay as well as the rest. If thou shalt retire thyself to thy studies, thou shalt avoid all care that tortureth man's life; thou shalt not be troublesome to thyself, nor unprofitable to others; thou shalt get thee many friends, and the better sort of men will accept thee. For virtue, although she be poor and abject, yet is she never obscured, but she sheweth the beams of her brightness afar off, and whosoever is capable will acknowledge and follow her steps. For if we renounce all conversation and fly from human society, and live only to ourselves, this solitude, deprived of all honest occupation, will find nothing at last whatever to addict herself to: we shall begin to build some houses, and to overthrow others; we shall turn the sea out of its place; we shall cause the rivers to alter their courses, and dispense the time very evilly, which nature gave us to bestow well. Sometimes we are too sparing, sometimes over prodigal; some of us employ the same in such sort that we can yield no account thereof; others have none left them, and therefore there is nothing more shameful to see than an old man that, to approve that he hath lived long time in this world, can produce no other witness but the number of his years. I confess well that we ought sometimes to retire ourselves but leisurely, and with a secure retreat, our ensigns displayed, and without impeachment of our worldly dignity. As they are more

valiant and assured than their conquerors that make a fair and honest retreat, so in my opinion ought virtue to behave herself; and if the inconstancy of worldly affairs disturb all, and taketh away from a virtuous man the means to do good, yet for all this ought he not to turn his back, nor to cast away his weapons to save himself by flight, nor to thrust himself in a secret place, as if there could be any corner where fortune could not find him out. But he ought to be less busy in affairs, and find out some expedient, with judgment, to make himself profitable to his country. Is it not lawful for him to bear arms? Let him aspire to some public charge. Must he not live privately? Let him plead. Is he put to silence? Let him help his citizens by his private counsel. Is it dangerous for him to enter the judgment place? Let him discharge the duties of a private citizen. And, therefore, have we not shut ourselves within the walls of one city, but have thrust ourselves into the conversation of the whole world, and have professed that the world is our country that we might give virtue a more spacious field to shew herself in. Is the tribunal shut against thee, art thou not admitted to plead, and to assist the common councils of the city? Look back and see what great nations and peoples are behind thee; never shall so great a part be kept from thee that a greater be not left thee. But beware that all this proceed not from thine own error, and that thou refuse not to undertake a public charge except thou be a consul, a prætor, an ambassador, a supreme dictator. What if thou wilt not be a soldier except

thou be a commander? Although that others have the vanguard, and fortune have put thee but in the rearward, do thy devoir in that place, fight with thy voice, thy exhortation, and thy courage. He also that hath his hands cut off in fight findeth some means to animate his companions, and standeth and encourageth them with crying. So must thou do, if fortune have drawn thee from the first rank of public charges, yet stand thou and help with thy crying. If thy mouth be stopped, yet stand and help with thy silence. The industry of a good citizen is never unprofitable, for by his hearing, by his sight, by his countenance, by his beck, by his obstinate silence, and by his very gait, he may profit. Even as certain wholesome drugs by their smell only, without either touch or taste, do comfort greatly, so virtue, whether she be scattered abroad or locked in herself, by authority or by accident; whether she be constrained to scantle sails or to be idle or mute, confined in a strait, or lodged at large, spreadeth afar and unperceived, performeth some great and profitable good. In brief, she serveth in whatever estate and countenance she be considered. What? Thinkest thou that the example of a man that liveth retired, and in private, is of little use? I say that it is an act of singular virtue to know how to forsake affairs, and to repose, when, the active life being hindered by divers accidents, or by the condition of estate, a man cannot effect his designs. For never see we affairs brought to that extremity but that a virtuous man hath the means to do somewhat that is good. Canst thou find

a city more wretched than that of the Athenians was at such time as the thirty tyrants rent it in pieces? They had put to death thirteen hundred of the most noble and virtuous in the city, and for all that, cruelty ceased not thus, but incensed itself, and augmented daily. Could this city be in repose wherein there were as many tyrants as there were soldiers? There was not any hope for these poor citizens to recover their liberty, nor any remedy whatsoever against such a multitude of mischiefs. Notwithstanding all these miseries, Socrates was in the middle of them, who comforted the mournful fathers, and exhorted those that despaired of the commonweal, and reproved the rich who feared for their goods for their overlate repentance of their dangerous avarice, and to those who would follow him bare about a worthy example, whilst amongst the thirty tyrants he walked confident and free. Yet this man did the Athenian murder in prison, and he that safely insulted over the troops of tyrants, his liberty could not a free city endure and hearken to. This I relate to the end thou mayest know that a wise man hath an occasion to show himself in an afflicted commonwealth. Howsoever, therefore, the commonwealth is disposed, howsoever fortune permitteth, so may we either enlarge or contract ourselves, provided always that we be active, and suffer not ourselves, being chained with fear, to be stupefied or astonished. Nay, he shall be truly a man who, when dangers are imminent everywhere, and when swords and chains thunder in his ears, neither despaireth nor fleeth

away. It is the last of all evils to depart from the number of the living before thou diest; but thou art to endeavour that if thou light on such a time, wherein thou canst not intermeddle with the commonwealth without danger, to usurp more time for thy repose and study, and no otherwise than in a dangerous navigation, make sail towards the haven, neither wait thou, until such time as affairs leave thee, but disjoin thou thyself from them.

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## XV. AGAINST AFFECTATION.



HEREAS thou travailest continually, and, to the exclusion of all else, endeavourest to make thyself daily more virtuous, I both praise thee and rejoice; and not only do I counsel, but I likewise entreat thee to persevere therein. But thereof I am to admonish thee, that, according to the manner of those that seek not so much to profit as to be seen, thou apply not thyself to do certain things which are over singular and remarkable for their strangeness, either in the manner of thy life or thy dress. Fly all sluttish behaviours, such as wearing thy hair over long, knotted and unkempt, thy beard untrimmed, such as lying on the ground, and making profession to have a sworn hatred against gold and silver, and whatsoever seeketh notoriety the wrong way. The bare name

of philosophy, with howsoever much modesty it may be used, is of itself sufficiently subject to envy. What if we separate ourselves from the ordinary habits of men? Inwardly we are totally unlike them, but our looks and behaviours must be agreeable to the good liking of the people. Let not our garment be either too gay or too slovenly; let not our silver be enchased with gold; still let us not think that it is a token of frugality to be destitute of gold and silver. Let us contrive to lead a better life than the common sort, not an opposite one; otherwise, instead of correcting them, we shall drive and banish them from us, and bring it to pass that in disliking to imitate all our actions they will not imitate any of them. The first fruits of philosophy are common-sense, humanity, intercourse and society from which we shall become separated by this dissimilitude of profession. Let us rather take heed, lest these fashions, for which we would be held in admiration, prove not ridiculous and odious unto others. Our aim is to live according to the direction of nature. But it is a thing altogether contrary unto her to afflict the body, to hate ordinary cleanliness, and to have a relish for squalor, and to use food not only coarse, but also harmful and distasteful. For, just as to affect and seek after delicacies is luxury, so is it madness to avoid such things as are usual, and can be purchased without great expense. Philosophy requireth frugality, not misery; and since there is such a thing as seemly frugality I think it good for a man to keep this measure. It behoveth us that our life be balanced betwixt morality and good

manners. I can be well content that men admire our life, but yet let them think of it as something within their reach. What then? Shall we do the same as the rest? Shall there be no difference betwixt us and them? The very greatest; but he only shall perceive the same that observeth us closely. He that shall enter our house shall rather wonder at us than our furniture. That is a great man who useth earthen platters like silver vessels, but no less is he great that useth silver vessels as earthen ones. Not to be able to endure riches is the part of a weak mind. But to impart unto thee the profit I have made this day, I have found in Hecaton that the end of coveting sufficeth to remedy fear. "Thou wilt cease," said he, "to fear if thou ceasest to hope." But thou wilt say, How can those extremes meet? It is thus, Lucilius, although these things seem to be contrary, yet are they united the one to the other. Even as one and the same chain bindeth both the officer and the prisoner, so likewise these things, although they seem different, are conjoined and march together. Fear waiteth upon hope, and I wonder not thereat; both of them are passions which proceed from a mind in suspense, and one that is in thought and care for that which is to come. But the greatest cause, both of the one and the other, is that we moderate not ourselves, and content not ourselves with things that are present, but send our thoughts out far before us. Hence it cometh to pass that foresight, which is the greatest benefit that betideth mortal man, becometh hurtful and harmful unto us. Brute beasts fly those



dangers which they see before their eyes, and having escaped them, their present security extinguisheth the memory of their fear; but we are affrighted, not only with our dangers past, but with those also that are to come. Many of these things given us as goods harm us; for our memory reviveth and representeth unto us the torment of the fear past, and foresight anticipateth it. There is no man whom present affairs only have made miserable.

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## XVI. ON GOING INTO SOCIETY.



WILT thou know that which in my judgment thou oughtest especially to fly? The multitude. For as yet thou canst not safely trust thyself unto them; and for mine own part I confess my weakness: I never return back again with those manners that I carried out with me. Somewhat of that which I have composed is troubled; somewhat of those things which I have chased away returneth back again unawares. That which befalleth the sick, who, by reason of their infirmity, are brought to this pass, that they can never be removed, without being made worse, fareth also it with us, whose spirits begin to recover from a long sickness. The conversation of many is uncongenial to us; every one lendeth us some stain, or imprinteth in us, or leaveth upon us an

impression before we know it; and the greater the company is wherewith we converse the greater is the danger. But nothing is so hurtful to good manners as going to a theatre, for there, by the pleasures we conceive, the vices steal on us more easily. What thinkest thou that I say? I tell thee that I not only return more covetous, more ambitious, more luxurious, but even more cruel and inhuman, because I have been amongst men. By chance I went into the amphitheatre at noon, expecting some sports and witty jests and recreation, whereby men's eyes might be reposed a while, that in the morning had been fed with the sheddings of men's blood. But nothing of the sort; whatsoever the battle was before was mercy compared with what I saw. Now letting pass trifles; there is nothing but mere man-slaughter; combatants have not wherewith to shield themselves, but expose their bare bodies to the stroke, and never strike without wounding. This spectacle do many prefer before that of the ordinary pair of combatants, or even those extraordinary ones which the people ask for. And why should they not prefer them? The weapon is kept off neither by helmet nor by target; and what is the use of these safeguards or of the swordsman's art? All they want is to see men killed—these are but the delays of death. In the morning men are cast to lions and bears, at noon to spectators. The killers are commanded to be set against those that are to kill, and they reserve him that is conqueror for another slaughter. Death is the end and aim of those that fight; war is waged with

fire and sword. These things are done just in the intervals of the legitimate spectacle. Go to, understand you not this, that evil example reflecteth on those that do this. Give thanks to the immortal gods that you cannot teach some to be cruel. A tender mind, and such as has too weak a grasp of the truth, is to be withdrawn from the common people; the contagion easily spreads, and the motley crowd might peradventure have shaken the great minds of Socrates, Cato, and Lælius. So far is any of us, even when we have knit our minds to the greatest virtue, from being able to sustain the assaults of vices, coming in such hosts. One only example of lust and avarice causeth much mischief. The company of a delicate man, by little and little, effeminateth those that converse with him. A rich neighbour kindleth our covetousness. A foul companion rubbeth on the rust of his foulness, and soileth the cleanest and uprightest man. What, thinkest thou, then, will befall those manners which are publicly assaulted? These perforce must thou either imitate or hate; but both the one and the other of these ought to be avoided, for fear that thou be either like unto the wicked, by reason they are many, or enemy to divers, because they are unlike to thee. Retire thyself therefore unto thyself; haunt those who can make thee better, admit those whom thou canst make better. This is the exchange thou shouldst make. Men, in teaching others, teach themselves. Above all things, beware lest thou expose thyself to great assemblies, or affectest to dispute or teach by way of ostentation, or desire to shew thyself.

I could wish that thou shouldest do so, if thou couldest in any sort be profitable to the people, but there is not anyone amongst them that can understand thee, and if haply thou find out one or two, yet must thou instruct them and form them to thy mind. Why, then, wilt thou ask me have I learned these things? fear not that thou has lost thy labour, if thou hast learned these things thyself. But lest I should reserve unto myself the profit I have gotten this day, I will communicate with thee three most worthy sentences to one sense, of which the one shall be to acquit this epistle of that which it oweth thee; the other two shall be given thee aforehand. Democritus saith, "I count one as a whole multitude; and a whole multitude as one." And he, whosoever he was, for it is doubted of the author, when it was demanded of him, why he took so great pains to prefer an art, which should profit but a few, answered very wisely, "A few," saith he, "are sufficient, one is sufficient, no one is sufficient." And the third is most excellent. Epicurus, writing to one of the consorts of his studies, "These things," saith he, "write I not to many, but to thyself; for we ourselves are a theatre great enough for one another." Such things as these, Lucilius, are they which thou must commit to memory, to the end that thou contemn that pleasure which proceedeth from the reputation and consent of divers. Many praise thee. What cause findest thou to rejoice because thou art he whom the people understand? Thy good is a matter only for thyself.

## XVII. THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.



BEWARE lest thy desire to read many authors, and all sorts of books, contain not giddiness and inconstancy of mind. Thou must be stayed, and, after a manner, nourished with certain spirits, if thou wilt apprehend anything that shall constantly remain in thy memory. He is nowhere that is everywhere. Those that pass their life in travel take up many inns, but entertain few friendships. It must needs so befall such, who acquaint not themselves familiarly with one spirit, but lightly traverse, and slightly overrun many things. That meat never nourisheth the body which is no sooner taken in but is delivered out. There is nothing that so much hindereth a man's health as the often change of remedies. The wound can hardly be cured that is covered with divers sorts of medicines. The tree prospereth not that is transplanted from one place to another. To be short, there is nothing so profitable that profiteth by passing it over. The multitude of books distracteth and distempereth the understanding. Being, therefore, unable to read as much as thou hast, it sufficeth to have as much as thou canst read. But now, sayest thou, will I overrun this book, now that. The stomach is distempered that longeth after divers sorts of meats which, being different and divers, do rather choke than comfort or nourish. Read, therefore, if thou wilt credit me, such books always as are most approved, and

though, for variety's sake, thou sometimes change, let the others be unto thee as thy harbour, those as thine ordinary retreat and house. Purchase unto thyself every day some new forces against poverty, and some counsels against death, and fortify thyself with other preservations against the changes of life, and after thou hast tasted divers things, lay hold on one which that day thou mayest digest. This likewise do I, of divers things which I read, I appropriate somewhat. See here what I have learned to-day of Epicurus, for I am wont sometime to pass into mine enemy's camp, not as a fugitive, but as a spy. A contented poverty, saith he, is an honest thing; but that is no poverty which is contented: for he that contenteth himself with his poverty is a rich man. Not he that hath little, but he that desireth the most, is a poor man. For what skilleth it how much a man hath in his chest, how much lieth in his barns, how much he feedeth, how much he profiteth by usury, if he still gape after other men's gains, if he make reckoning not of those things he hath gotten, but of that which remaineth to be gotten? Thou requirest of me what measure or proportion there is of riches? The first is to have that which is necessary; the next, that which sufficeth.

To what end serve so many infinite books and libraries, when their master in all his lifetime can scarcely peruse their catalogue? A multitude of books burdeneth and instructeth him not that learneth, and it is better for thee to addict thyself to few authors than to wander among many. Forty thousand books

were burned at Alexandria—a worthy monument of kingly riches. Some men may praise this, as Titus Livius did, who sayeth that it was a work that shewed the magnificence and wondrous care of kings. But this was not magnificence, or any other laudable act, but a studious excess. Nay, more, it was not studious, because they had gathered them, not to profit studies, but to shew their pomp; as it falleth out with divers ignorants, who scarce knowing the letters wherein their slaves are exercised, heap up books, not as instruments of study, but ornaments of their chambers. Let us, therefore, gather as many books as may suffice, and collect nothing for ostentation's sake. It shall be more honest (sayest thou) to employ my money herein than in vessels of Corinth and painted tables. That is every way vicious where there is overmuch. Why wouldest thou less pardon him that would get reputation by means of his marble and ivory, than that other that searcheth throughout all countries to buy unknown authors, and haply such as are reprov'd and censured, and doth naught else but breathe upon his books, and take no pleasure but in their covers or in their titles? Thou shalt ordinarily see amongst the idlest whatsoever orators or histories there are, and their studies filled up from top to bottom: and at this day amongst the baths and stoves libraries builded, as if they were a necessary ornament in the house. And all these works of learned men, excellently written, bound up, and enriched with their pictures, bought to no other end but for show and beautifying of walls.

## XVIII. ATHLETICS.



OUR fathers had a custom, which endured to my time, to begin their letters with these words: "If thou art in health, it is well." Now, think I that he should say as well, who shall begin thus: "If thou attendest to philosophy, it is well;" for that, in truth, is to be in health. Without it the mind is sick, and the body also, notwithstanding it be strong and able; for it is no otherwise healthy than as a man might say the body of one that is mad and troubled with the frenzy was so. Have care, therefore, especially of this first health, afterwards of the second, which will not cost thee much if thou behave thyself wisely; for it is a foolish thing for a man of letters to employ himself in exercising his arms, to feed himself fat, to strengthen his sides. When thou canst train thyself no more, so brawny art thou, yet neither in force or weight shalt thou equal a fat and grown ox. Besides this, the mind being choked up with the great charge of thy body, is far less agile and quick. Restrain thy body as much as possible, to the end thou mayest give a fairer and more spacious place and harbour unto thy mind. Divers incommodities wait upon them that are over-careful of the same. First of all, the travail of exercise spendeth the spirit, and disableth it from application and deep study. Then the excess of food dulleth the mind. The worst manners follow upon slaves being promoted to be masters; men occupied in



nothing but training, in whose opinion the day is happily passed if they have had a good sweat, and if in place of that which is exhaled thereby they have replenished their dry throats with a store of another liquor. Drinking and perspiring are signs of disease of the stomach. There are certain kinds of exercise which are easy and short, which loosen and supple the body without great loss of time, to which we ought to have a principal regard, as running, dumb-bells, high jump and long jump, and vaulting. Choose of all these which thou wilt, the use will make it easy unto thee. Whatsoever thou doest, return quickly from thy body to thy mind: this thou shouldst exercise day and night. She is nourished and entertained with little labour; neither cold nor heat hinder her exercise—no, not old age itself. Travail, therefore, carefully after this good, which is bettered by waxing old; yet will I not that thou always hang over thy book, or that thy hand be continually labouring on thy tables. There must be some intermission granted to the mind, yet so that it be not given over altogether, but remitted only.

## XIX. AGAINST LYING IN BED.



THE days are somewhat diminished, yet there is time enough if so be a man will rise more betimes and with the day itself, than if he should wait for the same in order to go and court others with the daylight. Base is that man that lieth slumbering long time after sunrise, that awakeneth at noon, and this time to some is early day. There are many that pervert both the offices of day and night, and that never open their eyes (being over-burdened by overnight's drunkenness) before the evening discovereth itself. Such as their condition is said to be, whom nature (as Virgil saith) hath placed as our Antipodes.

“ And when to us the dayspring doth appear,  
And blushing morn shows Phœbus' steeds are near,  
To them the ruddy eve with weaker light  
Kindles the lightsome tapers of the night.”

There are certain Antipodes in the same city who, as Cato saith, “ never saw either the rising or the setting sun.” Thinkest thou that these men know how to live that know not when they live? And these are they that fear death, in which they have buried themselves alive! Although they pass their nights in wine and perfumes, although they employ the time of their intemperate upsittings in feasts and variety of many dishes, yet those banquets which they

solemnise are not feasts but funerals. Assuredly there is no day too long for him that travaileth. Let us extend our life ; the object and proof thereof is action ; let night be circumscribed and somewhat thereof be appropriated to the day. Those birds which are bought to celebrate a feast are kept in the dark, to the end that by sitting still they may more easily become fat ; so such as lie without any exercise, a sluggish swelling invadeth their bodies, and a soft fat groweth about their limbs ; so deformed do their bodies seem, that have dedicated themselves to darkness. For their colour is no less displeasing than theirs that are wearied and made pale with sickness ; they languish, look pallid, and are discoloured, and in their life their flesh is corrupted. Yet will I say that this is the least of the evils in them ; how far greater darkness is there in their minds ! The one is stupid, the other is almost blind, and seemeth to vie with those that see not a whit. Whoever had eyes to use them in darkness ? Askest thou me how this blindness of the mind groweth, by loathing the day and transferring the whole life into night ? All vices fight against nature ; all of them leave their proper subjection. This is the purpose of excess, to rejoice in perverse things, and not only to depart from the right, but to fly afar off from it, and to be at length opposite unto it. Do not these men, in thy judgment, live contrary to nature that drink fasting, that pour wine into their empty veins, and sit down drunk to their dinners ? But this is an ordinary error in young men when in training. It is an ordinary matter to drink after dinner or supper ; our

country-gentlemen do the like, who are ignorant of true pleasure. That wine delighteth which swimmeth not upon our meals, which freely pierceth unto the nerves. That drunkenness delighteth which cometh upon an empty stomach. Seem they not, in thy judgment, to live contrary to nature, who are as effeminate in their garments as a woman? Live they not against nature who study to have childish beauty upon a wrinkled forehead? What can be more miserable or more horrible? Live they not against nature that in winter long for a rose, and by the nourishment of warm waters, and the fit change of heat in winter time, cause a lily, a spring flower, to bloom? Live not they against nature that plant orchards on their highest towers, that have whole forests shaking upon the tops and turrets of their houses, spreading their roots in such places where it should suffice them that the tops of their branches should touch? Live they not against nature that lay the foundation of their baths in the sea?—neither suppose that they swim delicately enough except their warm baths be environed with tempestuous billows. Having resolved in all things to oppose the customs of nature, at last they wholly revolt from her. Is it day? It is time to go to bed. It is night; now let us exercise ourselves, now let us to horse, now let us dine. Doth the morning approach? It is time to go to supper. We must not live according to common custom; it is base, it is an ordinary and vulgar course of life. Let the common day be relinquished, let the morning be proper and peculiar unto us. For mine

own part, I rank these men amongst the dead; for how little are they distant from their funerals, and those bitter ones that live by torch and wax light. I remember that at one time divers men led this life; amongst others, Atilius Buta, a prætorian, to whom, after he had spent all his goods, which were very great, in gluttony, and complained of his poverty to Tiberius—"Too late," said the Emperor; "thou art awakened." Montanus Julius, an indifferent poet, well known through the favour and neglect he had at Cæsar's hands, took pleasure to interlace in his verses these words, *ortus* and *occasus*, which signify the rising and the setting of the sun. One day a certain friend of his, being displeased because Montanus had not given over for the space of a whole day to recite from his compositions, said that a man should not give ear to a man so importunate. Natta Pinarius, taking fit opportunity, said, "Can I use him better or more courteously? I am ready to hear him from the sun rise to the sun set." When he had recited these verses—

"Phœbus begins to show his burnished light,  
And blushing day to spread his shining face,  
And now begins the swallow with delight  
To feed her young," etc.—

Varus, a Roman knight, a companion of Lucius Vinicius, an ordinary smell-feast, who was the better welcome by reason he wittily and bitterly jested at those whom he thought fit, cried out aloud, "Ah! then, Buta must be just getting into bed!" Again, when he had recited—

“ Now have the shepherds closed their fruitful kine  
Within their stalls, now dull and darksome night  
Begins to spread her sad and silent eye  
Upon the dulsome earth, deprived of light”—

Varus said, “It is now night, is it? Well, then, I shall off to say good morning to Buta.” There was nothing more notorious than this preposterous life of Buta, whereunto divers applied themselves at that time, as I have said. The cause of this disorder is not in that they think that the night hath anything more pleasant in it, but because nothing ordinary pleaseth them, and light is an enemy to a bad conscience; it contenteth not him that coveteth or disdaineth all things, according as they cost more or less, and the light costeth nothing. Besides, these unbridled persons will have their immoderate life spoken of, whilst they live; for if it be not observed, they think they lose their labour. They are ill-pleased, therefore, as often as they do not that which may make them be spoken of; many of these devour their goods; and if thou wilt have credit amongst these men thou must needs commit some notable folly. In a city so possessed with sin, a common and ordinary error is not looked after nor talked upon. I have heard Pedito Albinovanus report (who was a man of a very pleasant discourse) that he dwelt a little above Spurius Papinius’ house, who was one of the company of the night owls and light shunners. At the third hour of the night, saith he, I hear the lashing of whips, and I ask what he doth? They answer me that he calleth his servants to account. About the

sixth hour of the night I hear a shrill voice, and I ask what it is? and they answer me that he exerciseth his voice. I ask, about the eighth hour of the night, what that rattling of wheels meaneth? they answer that he will take the air. About daylight I hear running up and down; the pages are called for, the butlers and cooks make a stir. I ask what meaneth that? they answer one that he has come out of his bath and requireth broth and wine. Thou must not wonder, although thou findest so many varieties of vices; they are divers, and have innumerable shapes; their kinds cannot be comprehended. The managing of that which is good is simple, and which is evil manifold, and is disposed, in all sorts, as a man lists. The same befalleth manners: such as follow Nature are facile and free and have small differences; the rest are extravagant and never accord among themselves; but the especial cause of this sickness, in my opinion, is the hatred of a common life. As they distinguish themselves from other men in their garments, as in their great and costly suppers, and in the richness of their coaches, so will they be separated from others in the disposition of times; they will not sin ordinarily who in sinning seek for infamy as their reward. This do all they seek after who live perversely. Therefore, Lucilius, we are to follow that way which nature hath prescribed us, and neither must we wander out of the same. They that do this find all things facile and expeditious; but they that strive against the same, their life is no other than theirs who strive against the stream.

## XX. REFLECTIONS UPON CHRISTMAS DAY



DECEMBER is a month wherein all the city is much busied. Every one in public giveth way to licence; each ear is filled with the rumour and report of those preparations which are made for riot, as if the time were extraordinary, and that there was now any difference betwixt the Saturnalia and workdays. So little difference is there, that, in my opinion, he seemeth to have no way erred that saith, that in times past December was a month, now it is a year. If I had thee here I would willingly enquire of thee what, in thine opinion, ought to be done; whether we should change anything of our ordinary custom, or if (lest we should seem to show distaste for the common fashion) we should make better cheer and join in the games; for that which was not wont to be done but in days of tumult and in the turbulent estate of the city, that, for pleasure and holiday's sake, do we. If I know thee well, the matter being committed to thy judgment, neither wouldest thou permit that, in all things, we should resemble the common herd, neither, also, in every sort to be unlike them; except, haply, in these days especially, we ought to command our minds to retire themselves, and to abstain from pleasures wherein all the world is so disordered. She receiveth a most certain proof of her strength if she neither yield nor suffer herself to be transported by pleasure



and luxury. It is a matter far more difficult, and worthy a noble mind, to be sober alone, at such time as all people surfeit in drunkenness. This hath more temperance and discretion in itself, not to sequester a man's self, nor to separate himself overmuch, nor intermix himself with them, but to do the same things as they do, but not after the same fashion; for a man may celebrate a festival day without drunkenness. But so am I pleased to tempt the constancy of thy mind, that, according to the counsels of many great men; thee I will advise. Choose out certain days wherein thou mayest content thyself with the least and cheapest diet, and mayest clothe thyself in a hard and coarse garment. Say to thyself, "Is this that which the world so much feared?" In the fulness of thy security let thy mind prepare itself unto adversities, and against fortune's injuries confirm itself even in the height of her favours. In the midst of peace the soldier exerciseth himself in arms and skirmishes, and wearieith himself with superfluous labour, to the end he be more able and exercised when time requireth. If thou desirest a man should not fear upon any occurrence, exercise him beforehand to the accident. They that every month exercise themselves in imitation of poverty have profited so far as not to fear poverty itself, which they so oftentimes had both entertained and apprehended. Think not, now, that I command thee to go sometimes and take an ill supper with a poor man, contenting thyself with his bread and wine, or whatsoever else it is whereby luxury

findeth pleasure from the tedium of riches. I advise thee that both thy bed and thy apparel be truly poor, and that thy bread be stale and mouldy, and that thou entertain this pittance for three or four days; yea, sometimes more, to the end it may be unto thee not as a pastime, but as a test. Then believe me, Lucilius, thou shalt leap for joy, when, being satisfied with a little, thou shalt understand that to satisfy ourselves we have no need of fortune, for that which sufficeth necessity she oweth us in spite of her displeasure. Yet hast thou no reason, in accomplishing all this, to persuade thyself that thou hast done much; for what doest thou that many thousand slaves and beggars do not daily? All the honour thou canst give thyself is that thou doest it voluntarily. It shall be as easy for thee to endure it always as to attempt it sometimes. Let us, therefore, prepare ourselves to all casualties, lest fortune surprise us unprovided. Let us make poverty familiar unto us; we shall be more assuredly rich if we know that it is no grievous matter to be poor. That master of pleasure, Epicurus, had certain days wherein he very sparingly and niggardly suppressed his hunger, to prove if anything were wanting of his full and consummate pleasure, or how much wanted, or whether it were a thing of that value that a man should employ much labour in repairing the same. Himself saith this, in his epistle which he wrote to Polyænus Charinus, a magistrate, and he glorieth therein that all his victuals for one day cost him not threepence halfpenny, and that

Metrodorus' diet, who had not so far profited as himself, cost him no more. The ordinary allowance of the prisons is far more than this, and they that are condemned to die are not so poorly entertained by him that is their executioner. How great is the magnitude of his mind that maketh that habitude voluntary in himself, to admit those things with willingness which ordinarily are accustomed to be enjoyed as a penalty ; this is to prevent the weapons of fortune. Begin, therefore, Lucilius, to follow these men's customs, and take some days to thyself wherein thou mayest retire thyself from thine affairs, and content thyself with a little. Begin to have some converse and familiarity with poverty.

“ Be bold, my guest, and set proud wealth at nought,  
And make thee worthy God by modest thought.”

No man is worthy God but he that hath despised riches, of whose possession I debar thee not ; but my desire is that thou mightest possess them without fear, which by one means thou shalt obtain if thou canst persuade thyself that thou mayest live happily without them, and regard them no otherwise than as fleeting benefits thou canst well do without.

## XXI. MODERN LUXURY—SCIPIO'S COUNTRY HOUSE.



WRITE these things unto thee from Scipio Africanus' country house, where I am staying, and after having worshipped his departed spirit, and the chest in which, in my opinion, that hero is buried: the soul of him, indeed, I persuade myself, hath returned unto heaven, whence it was; not because he led great armies (for this also the furious Cambyses did, and profited by his fury), but for his great moderation and piety, more admirable in him when he left his country than when he defended it. Either Scipio must be deprived of Rome, or Rome of liberty. "Nothing," saith he, "will I derogate from laws, nothing from decrees. Amongst all citizens let there be an equal right. O my country, use the benefits I give you, but let me go. I have been the cause; I will also be the proof of your liberty, I depart, if I have waxed greater than is expedient for thee." How can I choose but admire this magnanimity? He departed unto voluntary banishment and relieved the city. The matter was brought unto that pass, that either liberty should do injury to Scipio, or Scipio to liberty. Neither was lawful. Therefore he gave place to the laws, and betook himself to his country house at Liturnum, as willing to give the Commonwealth the credit of his banishment as he had been to give that of Hannibal. I saw that same country house, builded of fore-square

stone, a wall compassing about a wood, towers also set under both sides of the house for purposes of defence; a cistern beneath the building and lawns, which was able to serve even an army of men; a little narrow gloomy bath, as the old fashion was,—for nothing seemed warm to our fathers unless it were dark. Great pleasure entered into me, as I contrasted Scipio's manners and our own. In this little nook that terror of Carthage, to whom Rome owes it that it was taken but once, would wash his body, wearied with work upon the farm; for hard work was his exercise, and he tilled the earth as our fathers used. It was under so mean a roof as this he stood; it was this mean floor that carried him. But now, who is he that would put up with such a bath as this? Poor and base seemeth a man to himself, unless the walls shine with great and precious plaques; except Alexandrian marbles be distinguished amongst Numidian stucco; except there be laid all about upon them a curious varied plastering like a picture; except the chamber be covered over with glass; except Thasian stone, which once was a rare spectacle even in a temple, forms the lining for the very baths in which we repose our bodies after copious perspiration; except the taps which pour water upon us are silver. And as yet I speak of the washhouses of the common people: what shall I say when I come to the baths of freedmen? What statues—what pillars holding nothing up, but placed for ornament's sake and for their cost—what water sliding down upon stairs with a great plash! To that delicacy are we come, that we will not

tread but upon precious stones. In this bath of Scipio's there be tiny chinks, rather than windows, cut out in the stone wall, that without taking off from the strength of the place they should let in the light. But now are they called "mosquito baths," if any be not framed so as to receive the sun, with wide windows all day long, except they be bathed and tanned both at once, except from their hip-bath they can look out upon both land and sea. Those, therefore, which drew crowds and astonishment when they were opened, these are relegated into the ranks of the old-fashioned, when riot hath devised some new thing, wherewith she outdoes even herself. But in old time there were few baths, and those not adorned with any trimming-up. For why should a trumpery thing be adorned whose end was use, and not delight? Water was not always being sprinkled about, neither always as from a warm fountain did it run fresh and sparkling for them to wash off their grime. But, ye gods! how it delighted one to enter into those very baths, dark though they were, and covered with ceiling of the common sort, which thou didst know that Cato, when he was overseer of public buildings, or else Fabius Maximus, or some of the Corneli, tempered with their own hands. For this duty the most noble overseers of public buildings performed, namely, of going into those places which were designed for the people, and of exacting neatness and a profitable and healthy temperature, not such as has lately come into fashion, liker unto a burning alive, so that a servant convicted of some wickedness should

now be sentenced to be bathed alive. No difference now seemeth unto me whether the bath be scalding hot or be but warm. Of how great rusticity may some condemn Scipio, because into his warm bath he did not let in the day with large windows—because he used not to broil in a great deal of sunlight, and used to be actually afraid of boiling in his bath? Poor wretch! he knew not how to live. He actually was not washed in filtered, but very often in dirty water—nay, almost muddy, when there was heavy rain. Neither much cared he whether it was so or not; it was sweat and not ointment that he came to wash away. Canst thou imagine how people will talk?—I envy not Scipio; he lived in banishment, indeed, who had to bathe thus, and in truth, if thou wilt know it, he did not have even this bath every day; for, according to those who have handed down the old manners of the city, they washed every day their arms and legs, which were begrimed with dirt, but it was only once in nine days that they washed all over. In this place, someone will say, it is apparent that they were most unclean. What must they have smelt of? of war, of labour, of heroism. After that clean baths are furnished, there be more filthy men. Horace having to describe an infamous man, and one notorious for too many delights, what sayeth he?—

“Of pomander doth Rufillus smell.”—

Thou wouldest give place to Rufillus now; as if he smelt like a goat, and as Gargonius did, to whom

Horace hath opposed Rufillus. It is too little to take an ointment upon thee except it be renewed twice or thrice in a day, lest it should vanish from the body. They boast of a perfume as if it were their own. If these things seem so sad unto thee, thou shalt impute it to the villa wherein I am.

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## XXII. A COMPLAINT AGAINST COMPLAINERS.



HENCE proceed these murmurings and complaints? Knowest thou not that in all the fancied evils of this life there is but this real one, which is, murmuring and complaining? If thou ask mine advice, I think there is no man miserable but he that thinks there is something miserable in the nature of things. I endure not myself that day in which there is something I cannot endure. Am I sick? it is a part of my destiny. Is my family afflicted with infirmities? Doth usury offend me, my house crack over me? Am I assaulted by dangers, wounds, travails, and fears? This happeneth ordinarily. This is a small matter, it is a debt which should be discharged; these are not casual, they are decreed. If thou wilt believe me, I discover freely unto thee what I think. Know that in all accidents which seem adverse and hard, such is my temper, that I obey not God, but am of one mind with him. I follow him voluntarily, not of



necessity. Nothing shall ever befall me that I will entertain sorrowfully, or with a sad countenance; I will pay no tribute unwillingly. All those things which we grieve at, for which we are in fear, are the tributes of life; for immunity from these, neither hope thou, nor pray thou, Lucilius. A sickness taketh hold of thee, the feast had little pleasure in it; —these are constant annoyances. I will come nearer: thou hast been put in fear of thy life. But knowest thou not that in desiring to be old, thou desirest such incommunities as are ordinary in a long life; as in a long way we find dust, dirt, and rain. But I would live, sayest thou, and feel no discommodity whatsoever. So effeminate a speech becometh not a man. Consider how thou wilt receive this wish of mine, which I protest with, a great and generous mind, that the gods and goddesses permit not that prosperity make thee a wanton. Ask thyself (if by permission of any god thou mightest have thy choice) which of these two thou wouldest accept, either to live in a market or in a camp. But our life, Lucilius, is but a warfare. They, therefore, that are tossed, that go up and down through difficult and steep places, that execute the most dangerous commissions, ought to be reputed valiant men, and chiefest in the army. But they whom, whilst their companions travail, a universal peace laps softly in its arms, are just turtle doves—safe, but not from reproach.

# APPENDIX

## TO THE

### LETTERS AND OTHER EXTRACTS.

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**SECT.**

1. *See Seneca.* "Treatise on Benefits," Book IV., Cap. IV.-VIII.  
Page 163. Benac, now called Lago di Garda.
2. *See Seneca.* Epistle 2, to Lucilius. These Letters, 124 in all, consist of moral maxims without any suggestive order. Lucilius Junior was procurator of Sicily.
3. *See Seneca.* Epistle 74.
4.     "             "     119.  
Page 186. Licinus, a Gaul, slave of Julius Cæsar, afterwards his steward. Governor of Gaul under Augustus, proverbial for his immense wealth.
5. *See Seneca.* "Treatise on Anger."  
Page 190. Heraclitus of Ephesus, called Scotinus, known as the "Weeping Philosopher."  
Page 190. Democritus, a Greek philosopher; contemporary with Plato, known as the "Laughing Philosopher."
6. *See Seneca.* Epistle 12.
7.     "             "     63.
8.     "             "     93.
9.     "             "Treatise on Anger."
10.    "             Epistle 47.
11.    "             "     44.  
Page 221. Cleanthes, a Stoic; pupil, and afterwards successor to Zeno. To pay his expenses while studying, he worked all night drawing water.

## SECT.

12. *See* Seneca. Epistle 104.

Page 222. Nomentanum, about fifteen miles from Rome, Martial and Nepos also had country places here.

Page 229. Lælius. Caius Sapiens, son of the famous general. He is the Lælius of Cicero's "Treatise on Friendship," etc.

Page 229. Chrysippus, a famous Stoic philosopher, successor to Cleanthes.

Page 229. Posidonius, a famous Stoic philosopher, a contemporary of Cicero. Settled in Rhodes, but removed to Rome B.C. 51.

13. *See* Seneca. Epistle 88.

Page 238. Cyllenius, a name of Hermes or Mercury.

Page 246. Aristarchus of Samothrace, a famous grammarian and critic. His edition of Homer seems to have been the basis of most subsequent editions. He lived about 200 B.C.

Page 246. Caius Cæsar or Caligula succeeded Tiberius A.D. 37.

14. This extract comprises the principal part of Chap. III. of Seneca's treatise "Of Tranquillity of Mind," a work which has been numbered amongst those which are profitable both for their matter and handling. It was written shortly after his return from banishment, when he was elevated to the prætorship and had become Nero's tutor.

15. *See* Seneca. Epistle 5.

16. " " " 7.

17. " " " 2. And the treatise "Of Tranquillity of Mind," Chap. IX.

18. " " " 15.

19. " " " 122.

20. *See* Seneca. Epistle 18. Our Christmas festivities are generally supposed to have originated in the Roman Saturnalia or Feast of Saturn, celebrated at the end of December to testify to the joy felt that midwinter was past and spring and summer approaching.

21. *See* Seneca. Epistle 86.

22. " " " 96.

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